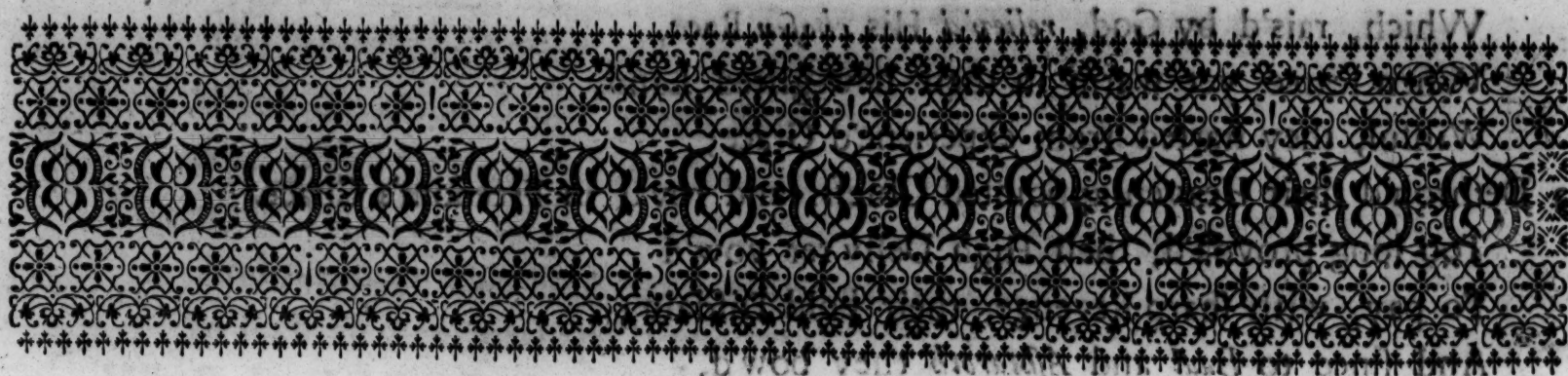


Twice is my subject, and that favorite hand,



He swore to bend their stubborn necks again.

4 And make them serve the law, while Gode they live in vain.

GIDEON

OR THE

Restoration of ISRAEL.

BOOK I



LOWING, pure, with hallow'd Fire,
I Seek, O Soul! some Heavenly Theme!
But bid no *Muse* thy Flights inspire,
Vain the Hope, the Name a Dream!

Thou, Great, *Almighty Spirit*, tune my Verse!

Accept my Off'ring, Sacred to Thy Praise!

And while, unfit, thy Wonders I rehearse,

Strike thy keen Lustre, sparkling, through my *Lays*!

Long, too long! the *wandering Art*,

Aw'd by Power, by Beauty *charm'd*,

Low has stoop'd to sooth the *Heart*,

And with a *smoky Fire* the *Passions* warm'd.

But Thou, Great *Origin* of Harmony!

Breathe through my Numbers a *Diviner Strain*!

And as Thy Servant *Gideon*, blest'd by Thee,

Restor'd Thy wrong'd Vicegerent's sacred Reign;

So now permit, All-Powerful Guide! to me;

2 Successful, to redeem the Use of Captive Poetry;

Thou, the Great *Author* of the Theme I chuse

Inspire me to describe it well, and be *Thy self* my *Muse*!

- Truth* is my Subject, and That fav'rite Hand,
 Which, rais'd by God, *reliev'd* His *chosen* Race,
 When scarce yet warm in their new-gifted Land,
 Willful, they started from experienc'd Grace;
 3 Dethron'd their Heaven-appointed Chiefs, and rov'd in Freedom's Chace.
 Too long provok'd, their High Deliv'rer vow'd
 To pay, with sharp Revenge, their bold Disdain;
 And since to *Baal* and *Ashtaroth* they bow'd,
 He swore to bend their stubborn Necks again,
 4 And make them serve the *Men*, whose *Gods* they serv'd in vain.
 Then *Gideon*, bold and generous Leader, rose,
 And taught lost *Israel* by his strange Success,
 How little Fear is due to proudest Foes,
 From Men, whom *God*, tho' late, resolves to *Bless*.
 Greatly prosperous, greatly brave!
 From a low Fortune, and a Race obscure,
 He, who well the Diff'rence knew,
 'Twixt being *Base* and being *Poor*,
 Durst highest Hopes, with humblest Means pursue;
 Show'd the just Pref'rence of a *Single* Pow'r,
 Which, not *Disputing*, still makes Haste to *Do*,
 To Those *slow* Clouds, which o'er Dominion *lowr*,
 Where many monstrous Heads, conjoin'd, do one lank State devour.
 When Rebel Tribes durst fatally anointed Pow'r depose,
 And, proudly weak, usurp'd *divided* Reign,
 Unvers'd in Rule, while o'er their Friends they rose,
 And fell, disgraceful, at the Feet of Foes:
 Fair Proof, that only Sovereign *Right*, can *Liberty* maintain:
 He, when His Country's joint Despair scarce Heav'n's wish'd Help implor'd,
 Redeem'd alone th'unhoping Land, and a Lost Prince restor'd.
 Hail, Divine Impulse! I Thy Waft obey!
 Hail, Glorious Theme! Mark'd out by Heav'n, Heav'n's Influence to display!
 And Thou, Directive Spirit! Shine, to point my blazing Way!
 But, while I rowse the Diffident God's wond'rous Paths to see,
 What *Humane* Power shall I invoke for Aid?
 What *Patron* to protect my Verse and Me?
 And strike bright Truth through Faction's dark'ning Shade?
 Why ask I This? Far be the low Desire;
 Not Earth's dim Fuel feeds Celestial Fire!
 Shine *Clear*, my Soul! Fly Flattry's hateful Sway;
 Nor court the fav'rite Phantoms of a Day:
 On *Just* Foundations, Thy strong Building raise,
 Nor *Shame* thy Subject by *misguided* Praise.
 5 Not to the prosperous *Present*, poorly kneel;
 But bid Thy Work, that hopes immortal Fame,
 Out-soaring Power's dark Heights, to Worth appeal,
 And bow before some Great, *unhappy* Name.



6 Who knows but we *may* see again, what once, amaz'd, we saw?
 Who knows but some black Time *may* come, when Force shall grapple Law,
 And hush pale Justice with Dominion's Awe?
 When struggling Right 'gainst Rage shall vainly strive,
 And proud Oppression ride the groaning World;
 When red Rebellion, sworn to State, shall, fat with Ruin, thrive,
 And Rapine's sable Flag stand wide unfurl'd?
 In such an Age, perhaps, some Prince may rise,
 Whose dreaded Worth, long-licens'd Hell, by bright'ning Misery, tries!
 Who, wand'ring Exil'd from His ruin'd Land,
 Sighs sad to Heav'n, to set his People free;
 To bless His Foes by His forgiving Hand!
 To shame mistaken Liberty, from her licentious Plea;
 And lift His State from Loads of Woe, like *Israel's* Slavery!
 Whene'er Thou Liv'st, This Work, O Prince! is Thine,
 Weigh, mighty Suff'rer! the inspir'd Design:
 And when, reading, Thou shalt see,
 How God through *Israel's* Night vouchsaf'd to shine;
 Hope, since That God still *is*, and still *will be*,
 His Hand, at Length, may reach some Clue to Thee!
 Perhaps, in Aid of Thy griev'd Soul's Desire,
 He may some modern *Gideon's* Breast inspire;
 Glorious, to rise against a General Weight,
 And light up Means, with Heav'n's prolific Fire,
 New Schemes of Hope, successful, to create,
 And Give Thee back, triumphant, to Thy State.

7 Now, from the swarming East, for seven long Years,
 Had restless *Midian* pour'd her swarthy Hosts;
 And, planting *Canaan* with erected Spears,
 Aw'd fainting *Israel* to her western Coasts:
 To These, old *Amalek* her Standards join'd,
 8 The marching *Hebrews* first and surest Foe;
 Thick, as the Locusts, in some *Living* Wind,
 A Tide of Death o'er all the Land they flow,
 Force and Rapine with them go;
 The Paths, they take, they mark with Blood, and march in Clouds of Woe!
 By God forsaken, God's proud People fly,
 Valiant no longer, than obedient found;
 Hopeless to live, and yet, afraid to Die,
 In Caves and dark Retreats they dwell on high;
 Thence prone look trembling, with pale Horror, round,
 While, from the rich and lower Ground,
 9 Their heavy Harvests load the plund'ring Foe,
 And, for Support of Those they curse, their Grapes and Olives grow:
 Dejected, now, their *Joshua* they forget,
 Nor longer warlike, *Other's* Land's invade;
 Anxious, now, their *Own* they quit,
 Poorly from reachless Rocks to borrow Aid,
 And, hid in Safety's eyeless Dusk, their boasted *Glory* shade.

- Westward, from Reverend *Jordan's* silv'ry Stream,
 10 Where Half *Manassa's* Tribe their Portion found;
Ophra salutes the Morning's Earliest Beam;
 From the East Brow of an extended Round
 Of rough and hilly Ground;
 Within which rugged Circle, copious *Plain*
 And fruitful *Pasture*, high enclos'd, remain;
 Impreguably secure, beneath their breachless *Mound*.
 Northward, far down, is *Jezreel's* Valley spread,
Jezreel by mighty Victories renown'd!
 'Twas on this Mountain's broad and fertile Head,
Joash, the future Hero's Father, dwelt;
Joash, whom daily Labour sweetly fed,
 Who, old in Ease, no Gripe of Care had felt;
 Crown'd with unenvy'd Plenty and Respect,
 He held a Pow'r which Fortune never check'd,
 And, sole and nat'ral Monarch of the Place,
 Reign'd in Paternal Majesty o'er all His Happy Race:
 Hard by his House a Rev'rend Oak there stood,
 Which there had flourish'd many a Cent'ry past,
 Long before *Israel* God or *Moses* knew,
 Or from *Egypt's* Chain withdrew;
 11 This Tree a Shade o'er half the Mountain cast;
 Stretch'd on a Bench beneath this copious Gloom,
Gideon, who oft, within, had wanted Room,
 Uncheck'd, to give His struggling Anguish Vent,
 Lay at the earliest Dawn of Light,
 Discerning all, but out of Sight,
 On mighty Ends and Contemplation bent:
 12 The Morning, rising over *Israel's* Spoils,
 Glow'd with a burning Blush to see her Shame;
 The wakeful Bees began their searchful Toils,
 And humm'd from Flow'r to Flow'r with tasteful Aim:
 High, to the Bright'ning Skies, the soaring Lark,
 Rose, warbling Welcome to the op'ning Day;
 Below, with humbler Melody,
 Hopping from Bush to Bush, from Tree to Tree,
 A Thousand Birds in mirthful Confort play:
 Slow, from the Plain, the melting Dew,
 To kiss the Sun-Beams, climbing, rose,
 And bore sweet Odours, upward as it flew,
 To guide their balmy Influence from the Foes;
 Still come fresh Zephyr fann'd the fragrant Vale,
 And still a thousand mingled Sweets rose with the Spicy Gale:
 Along the Mountain's steep, but blooming, Side,
 The creeping *Vine* and scentful *Myrtle* spread;
 On the Rock's Margin, high, with frightful Pride,
 The overhanging *Palm* the Winds defy'd,
 And rais'd in dang'rous State its branchy Head:

- At the Hill's Foot, with hoarse and murm'ring Sound,
 13 A winding Riv'let roll'd its pebbly Way;
 Delighted, through th' enamel'd Vale to stray,
 It a flow Passage into *Jordan* found:
 High, on either Side the Brook,
 A rip'ning Harvest bent her Golden Head,
 Bow'd to invite th' expected Reaping-hook,
 And waving wanton o'er its airy Bed,
 Sadly, at Distance, pleas'd their Sight, whose Taste it shou'd have fed.

All this fair Prospect with commanding Eye,
 The Thought-afflicted *Gideon* saw from high;
 Happy enough, had This been *all* his View:
 But, Oh! he saw the Camp of *Midian* too!

- Proudly spread in warlike Awe,
 Death's whole collected Pomp at once he saw:
 A mingled Horror glitter'd from below,
 Blew Tents, and Red and White, at Distance seen,
 Varied the Landskip with a threat'ning Show,
 And gleamy Swords and Lances glow'd between,
 And fill'd with terrible Delight the Sight-alarming Scene.

- 14 Here and there, high-mettled Steeds
 Bound loose in wanton Exercise, and neigh along the Meads;

- 15 In other Parts the Scyth-arm'd Chariots driv'n,
 Wheel round each other with well-practis'd Skill,
 Forming future Schemes to kill:

Swift ev'ry Way they *wind*, at Signals giv'n,
 And open wide, and close again at Will;
 Their brazen Wheels with Din the Vallies fill,
 And shoot their clatt'ring Echo's up the Hill:
 Then all at once, with yet more thund'ring Noise,

- 16 The tortur'd Drums and spritely Trumpets, join'd,
 Proudly proclaim the waking Conqueror's Joys,
 And swell their savage Triumphs up the Wind:

- 17 Then from his Bench, enrag'd, young *Gideon* leap'd,
 With Doubt and Shame and Grief and Anger torn;
 Has God, till now, says he, his Promise kept,
 And does he see us thus at last o'erborn?
 Why, thou immortal Leader of our Race!
 Why are thy Blessings heap'd upon this Land?
 The Milk and Honey of thy promis'd Grace,

Flow, 'tis true, o'er all the Place:

- But, oh! they flow to our Destroyer's Hand:
 And must it still be thus?— And can no Way be found?

Said I, *no Way*? Dishonest Sound!

There *can*, there *must*, there *shall*! This galling Yoke,
 Which haughty *Midian* will not ease,
 May, when God and *Israel* please,
 From off our Necks, at one resolving Stroke,
 Be strongly shook, or bravely broke!

But *who*, alas! *What Hand* shall guide the Blow?
 Heartless, our Tribes *indulge* their Overthrow;
 — *Half* with Treach'ry *aid* the Foe,
 And, false to Heav'n and Us, th' *Invader* own!
 The *other Half* who hold their Country dear,
 Doubting God's Help, because 'tis slowly shown,
Wish well for Conscience, and submit for *Fear*:
 18 Now were some boundless Power a general Bliss:
 Nay, what indeed does *Israel* want, *but This*?
 The Kings about us with uncurb'd Command,
 Timely directing, save their Land,
 We too were once with Monarchs blest'd, and prosper'd in their Hand!
 Now falsely aiming to be *safely Great*,
 Our boasted Freedom has enslav'd our State!
 In Governments where all aspire, and none through *Choice* obey,
 There, indeed, the balanc'd State,
 Will seldom feel a *Tyrant's* Weight;
 But Strength, so shar'd, shall melt in Jars away;
 And noisy *Contest*, weak'ning *Power*, the general Hope betray!
 Is there a Man throughout all *Israel's* Names,
 Who dares not, Hand to Hand, assault a Foe?
 Singly, All are free and brave;
 Together, but *one* Coward and *one* Slave!
 Since each united, sep'rate Worth disclaims;
 Why look we deep th' apparent Cause to know?
 We to defective Rule our Mis'ries owe;
 Once led by Lions to our Foes, we did like Lions prey,
 Now led by *Sheep*, we're *Sheep* as well as *They*!

 He spoke, and with a swift and manly Stride,
 Approach'd the Mountain's steepy Side;
 Sternly, awhile, he downward bent his Eyes,
 Then, on a sudden, as new Passions rise,
 Roll'd them, upbraiding, to the guiltless Skies:
 High beat his warm and wish-disorder'd Heart;
 His Bosom glow'd with wild Desires, and tingled with the Smart.

 While thus in busy Silence fix'd he gaz'd,
 The cleaving Heav'n's with streamy Brightness blaz'd:
 Panting, his tongueless Terror *wou'd* have spoke,
 But as he view'd the yawning Chasm, amaz'd,
 Close at his Heels a bursting Thunder broke,
 And hissing Light'ning findg'd his Hair, and vanish'd with the Stroke.
 He turn'd, and in his late left Station saw,
 Beneath the Oak, a Youth divinely fair,
 Sitting like some familiar Friend: Some Part'ner of his Care!
 Pensive, he lean'd his Head on his left Hand;
 His smiling Eye shed Sweetness, mix'd with Awe,
 His Right Hand, with a milk-white Wand, some Figure seem'd to draw!

A nameless Grace was scatter'd through his Air,
 And o'er his Shoulders loosely flow'd his Amber-colour'd Hair!
 As Gideon, wond'ring, toward the Stranger drew,
 The Heavenly Visitor approach'd him too!

Hail! brave Youth, he cry'd, All Hail!
 Thou Staff of Israel! Her appointed Guide!
 O'er yon gay Host Thy Sword shall soon prevail:
 Hope boldly; God will fight on Gideon's Side.
 Whoe'er thou art, the Hero, sad, reply'd,
 Who know'st so well th' unhappy Gideon's Name,
 Wou'd thou cou'd'st tell, since God is on my Side,
 19 How comes it, he permits my Country's Shame?
 Where is the saving Rod of Moses now?
 Or, where the Force of Joshua's warlike Hand?
 Fain wou'd we now discern, but know not how,

That Foe-preventing Cloud by Day,
 Or by Night, That fiery Ray,
 Which led our Fathers to this happy Land!
 What needed all this Waste of Wonders done,
 Since here, scarce seated, we must fall at last?
 Why, out of Pharaoh's Grasp, was Israel won,
 And the Red-Sea miraculously past?

Since thus our Lot's for Ruin cast,
 Methinks, more nobly wretched twou'd appear,
 To be in Egypt Slaves than here!
 Since God forsakes Us, now, why did He chuse,
 And call us His at first?

By Blessings past, now doubly curst:
 False Hopes do Men to their own Loss amuse!
 Better ne'er know a Bliss than soon to lose:
 As for my self, fain wou'd I credit thee;
 Long, my fond Wish has snatch'd at all, thou now has promis'd me!
 But void of Means to undertake the warm, the sparkling Aim,
 The Curb of Fortune keeps my Courage tame:
 Of all our Tribe the poorest Race is mine,
 And of that poorest Race the meanest, I:
 Be it suppos'd, that I incline
 The Lot of War to try;

Where is my Power, my Interest, my Fame?
 20 Will Israel's haughty Tribes be led by one without a Name?

The Angel interrupting here, thus awfully reply'd:
 Has not Israel God defy'd?
 If, from affronted Heaven, th' ungrateful Race
 Hope lost Assistance, and wou'd still prevail,
 Why have they broke God's Laws? Declin'd His Grace?
 And poorly bow'd to Ashtaroth and Baal?
 Were These the Gods, who from th' Egyptian Land,
 Freed their lost Fathers with unhop'd Success?

'Twixt wave-built Walls conducted them to *Idumæa's* Strand,
 Their Guide too, o'er the pathless Wilderness!
 And gave directive Power to *Moses' Wand*,
 The proud Attempts of hostile Earth to check,
 And govern Heav'n with its commission'd Beck:
 With liquid Rills of melting Rock, to stream the springless Land:
 To draw down Manna on the barren Sand,
 And save and bless them with a mighty Hand?
 Since stubborn, weak and insolent, for empty Idol's Sake,
 Their Articles with Heaven they dare to break:
 Since Heav'n's Vicegerent's gentle Yoke from their proud Necks they shake,
 What vain Presumption bids them judge it fit,
 God, so provok'd, shou'd still permit,
 That they who slight the *Covenant*, shou'd reap the *Benefit*?
 But thou wou'dst say, They now repent at last;
 That sadly conscious of their Error past,
 Groaning in Anguish of their Souls, their Eyes to Heav'n they cast:
 How small th' Attonement! and how great the Sin!
 Yet it suffices that they late begin
 To quit the Paths they've too long wand're'd in!
 Unutterably Glorious! God disdains,
 To feel a *Pleasure* in his *Creature's Pains*;
 Gracious, he *pities* their complaintful Woe,
 And wills, that they *new* Proofs of Mercy take
 From Him, to whom so many *old* they owe:
 Men, who leave God, but their own Blis forsake.
 I therefore his Ambassador am sent,
 To warn Thee, *Gideon*, of his high Intent;
 Boldly resolve and safely undertake;
 Hail! Heav'n's illustrious Instrument!
 Thou shalt accomplish all those Ends on which thy Thoughts were bent.

Gideon sigh'd sad, and graceful shook his Head;
 Heedful to question e're He well believ'd
 So strange a Message, tho' from Heav'n receiv'd;
 The deep-discerning Nuncio plainly read
 Each Scruple in his arguing Fancy bred.
 Bring me, brave Youth! from yon abandon'd Seat,
 That Gourd of Wine, and let me taste thy Meat:
Gideon with joyful Diligence obey'd,
 And humbly at his Feet a Napkin spread,
 And neatly on it laid
 His little store of Wine, and Flesh and Bread:
 Yet half amaz'd at what he did,
 My Lord, says he, who such high Things reveals,
 Stoops not, I know, to tast of mortal Meals;
 The Food of *Angels* is not Flesh of *Kid*:

21 But learn, reply'd the glorious Guest, from this Consent to know,
 Men to Heav'n's Mysteries *Faith implicate owe!*

Let the *Command* suffice; nor Reason's Eye,
 With dang'rous Keenness seek the darken'd *Why!*
 Where God has said, *I'll have it so*,
 All curious Inquisition must be spar'd,
 And nothing sought beyond what stands declar'd;
 Be not in humane Ignorance too scrupulously wise;
 Remember that *obedient Faith* is Man's best *Sacrifice*.
 He said, and gently stretching out his Hand,
 Touch'd the spread Napkin with his snowy Wand;
 As from huge Furnaces the vap'ry Stream
 Mounts thick, and widens in expanded Steam;
 So, while the Angel his last Warning spoke,
 At the watch'd Summons of the Wand's soft Stroke,
 A spouting Flame from the dry Surface broke:
 And cover'd and consum'd the humble Store;
 Lovely the Fire rose, whirling, mix'd with Smoke,
 Folding in glorious Volumes, o'er and o'er,
 And upward on a curling Cloud the mounted Angel bore:
 Gideon look'd after him, and *won'd* have spoke;
 While, ravish'd with the fierce Delight, he saw him gently soar,
 Till forc'd to give the dazzling Prospect o'er,
 His Eyes in wat'ry Sadness, wept the Bliss they felt no more!

Musing a-while, and dumb with deep Suspense,
 Thus loud, at last, his Wonder broke its Way;
 Immortal God! whose Honours high Defence,
 Thy own Almighty Hand cou'd best display:
 Thy Hand! beneath whose angry Grasp, whole Worlds wou'd melt away;
 Can it be possible, to one, like Me,
 Without Desert, of no Degree,
 It shou'd be left to draw the Sword for Thee:
 But wond'rous, ever, were thy Ways!
 All Means are equal in thy sovereign Hand:
 And all Things possible where Man obeys
 His Maker's wise Command:

Why stand I then to weigh Decrees I must fulfil?

'Twas *holy* Flame, I find, that did inspire

My Soul's ungovernable Fire;

And that was *working Providence* which some call'd *mad Desire*:

Hence then, with Apprehensions and Delays,

Hence, with all doubted Want of humane Skill:

That God who made us for his Praise,

Can mould us to his Will.

While he yet spoke, from *Ophra's* neighb'ring Walls,

A winding *Horn*, in short and sudden Calls,

Invades his Ear with high and hoarse Alarms,

And from the Town a mingled Tumult swarms,

Of every Rank, all Ages, weak and strong,

Flowing in Tides of Uproar thick along:

Confus'dly arm'd, and more confus'dly led,
 They seem'd with eager Threatnings to pursue
 A Party, which along the Mountain's Side
 In more Disorder fled.
 Gideon in haste to his near House withdrew,
 There, with a Spear, his warlike Hand supply'd,
 And overtook the Crowd, and follow'd too!
 This was a Party, which from Midian's Camp,
 Had in the cov'ring Dusk of Night been sent,
 To climb the Mountain, silent and unspy'd;
 And there, till Dawn of Day, with close Intent,
 'Gainst op'ning of the Gates, expecting lie,
 Among the craggy Heights and Bushes nigh;
 Hopeful, that like a Deluge pouring in,
 They, by Surprise, might force a Town, which Siege would slowly win:
 But Joash, early rising every Day,
 Took Pleasure to behold the Morning break;
 To watch the first faint Shoots of Twilight play,
 And Night's dissolving Shades melt soft away:
 He, while a fragrant Walk he meant to take,
 Round the known Borders of his well-till'd Farm,
 And little dreamt of such a neigh'ring Harm:
 From the Hill's Brow discern'd the Points of Spears,
 Suspiciously, in sloping Ambush bent,
 And heard the rustling Bushes shake along the green Descent.
 His grave Experience soon found Cause of Fears,
 And from his near and happy-feated Farm,
 Had timely giv'n the Town this strong Alarm.
 Prevented, the discover'd Ambush rose,
 And swift retreated down the craggy Hill;
 Gideon, whose Breast expected Glories fill,
 Doubly inspir'd to be so near his Foes,
 Wing'd his swift Feet with Heav'n's remember'd Will,
 And now, nigh-reaching, gain'd upon 'em still:

22 Oreb, a Midian Prince of warlike Fame,
 Who led this Party on their bold Design,
 Deeply touch'd with Rage and Shame,
 Had labour'd earnestly to stop their Flight,
 But neither Blows nor Pray'rs cou'd now incline
 His scattering Files to bear the Hebrews Sight.
 Mov'd by a brave and princely Mind,
 He let the rushing Numbers pass him by,
 And march'd, securely slow, behind:
 Oft looking back with heedful Eye:
 Himself an Army while his People fly!
 He, when he found himself too nearly prest,
 Turn'd sudden, in a steep and winding Way,
 Where scarce two Men with Care cou'd walk a-breast;

Such hard and narrow Passage open lay;
 And jutting Rocks, and frightful Steeps hung horrid o'er the Rest.
 Since, like a timorous Herd, says he, *yon Cowards rush away,*
 Nor blush in Arms, *their Sovereign to betray,*
 Let them enjoy their Safety, *as they may,*
 'Twere but more *welcome*, were it gain'd in a more noble Way.
 'Tis now *Their* Shame that shook by Fear, *their Duty they neglect;*
 'Twere *Mine*, shou'd I to punish it, my proper Charge reject,
 'Tis a King's glorious *Business* to *Protect.*

- 23 He said: And o'er an Angle of the Path,
 Observ'd a tott'ring Cliff which loosely hung,
 Broke by long-drenching Rains and wintry Wrath;
 It pendant 'twixt a Promontory's Ends,
 Nods awful o'er the forky Bed, and pond'rous downward tends.
 High to the Rock that props it, he ascends;
 Long, to the vast unwieldy Weight, with struggling Labour clung,
 And down, at last, a-cro's the Path, the loady Barrier flung.

Gideon, who just approach'd it as it fell,
 Strides back, amaz'd, and scarce believ'd his Sight!
 Whoe'er thou art, he cry'd, thou tim' it well;
 And sure, to do thy envied Courage right,
 He who so bravely *flies*, wou'd nobly *fight!*
 Scarce had he spoke, when with a threat'ning Spear,
 Down on the Bulwark Rock, Prince *Oreb* leapt:

Hebrew, says he, thou art not safe so near,
 Retire, this Pass will be too strongly kept:
 Speaking, aloft he shook his Death-arm'd Lance,
 And high against the Foe presents his Shield:
 The slow-descending Crowd now scarce advance,
 But from the rugged Steep in spiral Line,
 Aw'd and astonish'd at the fierce Design,
 Stand gazing at the Wonder they beheld!
 Dreadfully bright his gilded Armour shone;
 O'er his left Thigh a crooked Sword declin'd;
 A feath'ry Plume, high from his Helmet rose,
 And loosely gay, wav'd warlike in the Wind:
 Crimson and mingled black in flowing Rows;
 Severely charming to his distant Foes:
 Of all the Prefs, *Gideon* alone comes on,
 The rest in safe Defiance, *shout* behind;

- 24 And thick as Hail, hurl Jav'lins down in vain,
 Which, clatt'ring on his Shield, rebound and tremble back again.

Gideon, who long observ'd th' unequal War,
 And blush'd to see it basely wag'd from far:
 Lifting his Arm, to stay their Darts, gave Sign that he alone,
 Wou'd make the Hazard now his own!

All held their Hands, and *Oreb* smiling, saw
 The threat'ning *Hebrew* near him draw.
 Till cautious to prevent his swift Advance,
 With well-directed Aim, he poiz'd and hurl'd his beamy Lance:
 Downward the Champion shrinks his watchful Head,
 And harmless by, the whizzing Weapon flew,
 But wou'd not miss his Station too:
 Deep in the craggy Path its Entrance found,
 And mad to lose th' important Wound,
 Jarr'd upward, as it stood erect, and quiver'd in the Grounds.
Gideon approaching from beneath the Rock,
 Aim'd at the tow'ring Prince an upward Blow;
 The failing Target yielded to the Shock,
 And the swift-entering Spear broke thund'ring through,
 Half out, his Sword, the dreadful *Oreb* drew,
 When Fortune interpos'd a strange Event,
 And check'd th' impatient Speed his Ardour lent:
 For the surpriz'd Assaulter from below,
 Pulling to disengage his fasten'd Spear,
Oreb, with both his Hands, through prudent Fear,
 Grip'd fast th' endanger'd Shield with timely Strength,
 And *Gideon*, tugging for his Spear, at length,
 Help'd by the Staff's Resistance strongly grasp'd,
 Swift climb'd the Rock, and reach'd his Foe; and his arm'd Body clasp'd.

To Heav'n a thund'ring Shout the *Hebrews* sent,
 Pleas'd and surpriz'd at the unhop'd Event:
 The Champions join'd, the Shield is now thrown by,
 Lab'ring, they strive each other's Weight to lift;
 In grappling stretch, their well-knit Limbs they try;
 Now with a springy Force, in starting Rage,
 Their nervous Arms they disengage:
 Then, as again, they thund'ring meet,
 Strike out, with tripping Aim, their sin'wy Feet;
 Oft with new and subtle Drift,
 Nimble, from Side to Side, their Hold they shift;
 Fiercely attempting, and avoiding swift.
 Toiling, they drag and heave, and twist and strain;
 And practise all their Sights, but all in vain:
 Fiercely provok'd by long Delay,
 And bent their utmost Vigour to display,
 A last strong Effort terribly to make,
 With Feet firm fix'd, and stretch'd-out Arms, they join in mutual Shake:
 Sudden, they feel the Rock beneath them quake,
 Rotten, the stony Stage begins to break,
 And groaning to sustain the struggling Weight;
 Just in the Height of their contending Arts,
 Pendant the flaty Cliff cracks loud, and splits in two huge Parts;
 One Piece fell upward, and one down the Streight:
 Backward, at once, th' unclosing Warriors fall,
 And quit the Contest with reluctant Hearts:

Gideon,

Gideon, a-while, lay stunn'd above ; *Oreb*, who downward fell,
 Roll'd seven steep Paces e'er his Feet he gain'd,
 And rising, wonder'd, he escap'd so well :
 Then, recollecting how this sudden Chance,
 Had broke the *Pass* which he maintain'd,
 And laid it open to his *Foe's* Advance ;
 Convinc'd, that now 'twere Toil in vain,
 Shou'd they, thus staid, pursue his flying Train,
 Swift as the Tiger bounds, he leaps away,
 Light, and regardless where his Passage lay ;
 Till near behind he hears a swelling Shout,
 Then, stopping short, looks unresolv'd about,
 Till in the Mountain's hollow Side, he marks a dusky Cave,
 And enters there with glad Surprise, his future Hopes to save.

As rapid Currents choak'd by Float and Mud,
 Stopp'd for a Time, grow still, and smooth their Flood ;
 But when some Chance has clear'd th' obstructed Way,
 With ten-fold Force renew their sweepy Sway.
 So, when the *Hebrews* saw the Passage free,
 In headlong Cataract down the Steep they gush'd,
 And in rude Flow, fast by the Cavern rush'd,
 Hopeless, that *Oreb* cou'd so near them be.
 To the Hill's midmost Verge, at last, they came,
 Where a broad Terras, form'd by Nature, spread,
 And round the Mountain rear'd a penfile Plain ;
 Hither, by vain Pursuit, the *Hebrews* led,
 Beheld th' escaping *Foe* the Valley gain,
 And safely there in rallying Ranks make Head ;
 While, at a Distance, cross the forded Stream,
 Detach'd from *Midian's* Camp, they Squadrons view'd,
 From whose bright Weapons flash'd a dismal Gleam ;
 Form'd, they advance, as Men who right conclude,
 That by the distant Noise they heard, their Party flies pursued :

26 *Gideon*, who found it prudent to retreat,
 With his mix'd Train reclinb'd the steep Ascent ;
 And slowly marching with unwearied Feet,
 Examin'd every Cavern as he went :
 From that in which Prince *Oreb* lay, sudden an entring File,
 With Eyes cast back, all trembling, outward flew ;
 Close at their Heels came dreadful *Oreb* too,
 By Nature always eager to pursue ;
 But when he *Gideon* saw and knew,
 He sheath'd his Sword, and with a graceful Smile,
 Not oft, says he, this Sword in vain I drew ;
 Now learning first to yield, 'tis best I yield to You :

The gen'rous *Hebrew*, bowing mild, reply'd ;
 Fortune not always blesses the most Brave,
 She might have robb'd me else of Power to save,
 And turn'd the Vict'ry on my Pris'ner's Side :

While they were speaking, and the should'ring Crowd,
 Morosely insolent, and rudely loud,
 Was gath'ring round them for a gaping View,
 As if the *Conquest* were not crown'd without the *Insult* too!
 A second Chance diverted the wild Throng,
 For some, who newly search'd the Cavern round,
 Return'd, and shouting, with them drag'd along
 Ten wretched Slaves, whom there conceal'd they found;
 Poor Fugitives, of ancient *Canaan's* Race!
 Once happy Owners of the promis'd Land,
 Till forc'd to give th' invading *Hebrews* Place,
 They now liv'd Subject to their harsh Command:
 Severely us'd, and tir'd with Length of Woe,
 The new-found *Ten* had from their Masters run,
 Drawn by the Nearness of the general Foe,
 To meditate Escape, and Slav'ry shun:
 They might, perhaps, with *Midian* join'd, be free,
 Worse than they were, they knew they *could* not be:
 And there's a Kind of mournful Ease in Change of Misery.

When to the Town the noisy Press
 Return'd with Shouts, their Triumph to express,
 Shouts! the Voice of proud Success:
 27 Th' assembled Elders o'er the City-Gate
 Were met, and sat in grave Debate,
 On Matters which concern'd the Good of *Ophrah's* little State:
 Seven was their Number, and they chose to sit
 In Form of a Half-Moon, whose Points were fill'd
 By two of *Levi's* sacred Tribe, best skill'd
 To read their *Laws* in rev'rend Myst'ry writ:
 Full in the Centre hoary *Joash* sat,
 Renown'd for Virtue, and rever'd for Age:
 The other Four were Men of Years and Skill,
 Fam'd *Themselves* for thunning Ill;
 And therefore thought best qualify'd to govern *Others* Will:
 To these the Crowd their ten Deferters bring,
 And tell where found, and on what Errand bent;
 To these they also show the captive King:
 Loud in all Ears, they *Gideon's* Praises ring;
 Tell what they saw, how far they went,
 And what their Pris'ner *Oreb* did to stop their swift Descent.

Slow rose *Eliakim*, the Town's High Priest,
 The ruling *Levite* and the Senate's Tongue:
 A Man who dar'd, in Zeal to Heav'n, bewail
 Religion lost, and *Hebrew* Fame decreas'd:
 He well remember'd, while he yet was young,
 How *God* enabled *Israel* to prevail;
 And sigh'd to see th' ungrateful People fail;
 But never bow'd the Knee Himself to *Astartoth* or *Baal*.

Bless'd be our Father's God, says he, this Day:
 That God to whom we owe our All; to whom we Nothing pay:
 Gideon! Methinks I feel thy Father's Joy:
 O! May thy blooming Glories never fade:
 No Envy sure, will his just Honours shade;
 Whom his lov'd Country's Good so soon, so nobly, does employ:
 The Prince, your Captive by the Right of War;
 Dispose of at your safe Discretion's Choice;
 And since we all alike your Debtors are,
 Accept *Our* Thanks as from the general Voice:
 Go on and prosper; Heav'n shall bless thy Aim;
 This but the Dawning of thy future Fame:
 For *You*, (and then he turn'd to *Canaan's* trembling Sons)
 Known Custom points us to your mournful Lot:
 Since every Slave who from his Master runs,
 Dies, whether guilty of *more* Crimes, or not.
 He spoke; and bending toward the other Seats,
 Ask'd if he utter'd more than as *They* meant;
 And then distinctly, his first Words repeats;
 And all the Elders rose at once, to testify Consent:

 Gideon, whose Heart, tho' brave, cou'd Pity feel,
 And shar'd in *all* the Woes he cou'd not Heal.
 Thought the Slaves Sentence too severe;
 And bowing, graceful, spoke these Words so loud, that all might hear.
 Who, reverend Fathers, after this will flag in Honour's Chase?
 The Prize so glorious, and so short the Race:
 Too much you *pay* me, for too little *won*:
 If but to do our Duty claims such Praise;
 For, what has Gideon further done?
 We live, I fear, in unperforming Days.
 But your Applause, perhaps, is meant to raise
 A *future* Worth by *previous* Praise.
 If so, my conscious Hope shall keep me dumb;
 I take your present Thanks for Actions yet to come.
 One Cause, however, pardon me if I presume to plead,
 I cannot wish to see these Wretches bleed:
 Who knows what Hardships their unhappy State
 Had try'd their Patience with, e'er yet they fled?
 Death may in *happy* Men create a Dread,
 But the cold Grave is *Mis'ries* restful Bed:
 There are Oppressions of such monstrous Weight,
 That 'twere a happy *Freedom* to be dead:
 If *Theirs* were such, you miss your prime Intent,
 And give them *Bliss* instead of *Punishment*.
 Judge not, I pray you, that I misbehave,
 Or pride my self, or think you Favours owe;
 Because for these poor Men I Mercy crave:

Israel Herself was once a Slave,
 Grant, Heav'n! She never may again be so,
 Or find a *Moses* or a *God* to save:
 If then our Fathers found it hard the Yoke to undergo,
 And having once been unoppress'd and free,
 Thought it their Glory and their Right to fly from Slavery,
 Instruct me Rev'rend Rulers! why these Men,
 Now in the Case, which *was* all *Israel's* then,
 Shou'd merit *Death* for daring to design
 That noble Search of *Liberty* which first made *Israel* shine?

He ceas'd; approving *Joash* smil'd with Pride,
 And heard with kindred Joy, his Offspring blest;
Eliakim, with weak, but willing Stride,
 And Hands uplifted, which his Zeal exprest,
 Came forward, and to blushing *Gideon*, cry'd,
 Close let me press Thee, to my Hope-warm'd Breast:
 No narrow Bounds of *Custom*, *Int'rest*, *Will*,
 Shall e'er confine the Reach of *Gideon's* Soul;
 28 A Mind so spacious and so clear a Skill,
 Is sure design'd by Heav'n for wide Control:
 O! take the pardon'd Slaves, thy Mercy's Prize:
 Thou plead'st too justly to be heard in vain:
 Their Fate, henceforth, in Thy own Bosom lies,
 And as thy Servants, all the Ten retain.
 What happier can they wish, or hope to be?
 Thou sav'st their Lives, and now they live for Thee.

Th' Assembly rose, and the Remains of Day
 Were in triumphant Pastime nois'd away.
 At length *still* Night her solemn Influence shed,
 And dew-drench'd Sable wrapt the Mountain's Head:
 Sleep's heavy Drag the Rage of Joy deprest,
 And weary Tumult hush'd herself to Rest;
 But *Gideon's* active Mind was broad awake.
 His new-gain'd Honours, and the Angel's Hail,
 Suffer'd *Him* no Rest to take!
 But led him *pensive* o'er the Grounds through Night's opacous Veil:
 29 Wand'ring, at last, he reach'd the Grove of *Baal*:
 Westward, upon the Mountain's Edge it stood,
 Where a *new* Hill in terrass'd Stages rose,
 And did a circl'y Pyramid compose,
 Whose ev'ry Stage was a small sep'rate Wood;
 The lowermost, planted thick with baleful *Eugh*,
 Cou'd with brown Horror quench the Glare of Noon,
 But now from *Night* a deeper Dusk it drew:
 The fun'ral *Cypress* the next Stage o'erspread;
 The Third, which less'ning upward, wanted Room
 For Trees of huge and branchy Head,
 The deep-ting'd *Laurel* cover'd thick with her umbrageous Gloom.

Round the fourth Edge a climbing *Ivy* crept,
 And into bushy Shade high-arching grew;
 There in dark-tufted Roofs black Ravens slept,
 And Owls, which never Day-Light knew:
 Round like a tabled Plain, the last high Stage
 Nourish'd one tow'ring Oak, which strongly stood,
 The Time-swell'd Growth of many a perish'd Age,
 And bore on one proud Trunk a spacious Wood.
 Down o'er the shaded Grove the Giant-Branches hung,
 And form'd a sheltry Arbour round the Bole:
 Mov'd by the Wind with murmur'd Sweep they swung,
 And blew cool Horror over Gideon's Soul,
 From Stage to Stage, broad Steps of half-hid Stone,
 With curling Moss and blady Grass o'ergrown,
 Led to the Top, where reign'd this Monarch Oak;
 From the black Boughs hung, melancholy, down
 One glimm'ring Lamp, dull'd by its own thick Smoak,
 Which feebly, thro' a Lantern's Sides, the bord'ring Darkness broke.
 By the pale Beams it faintly scatter'd round,
 Under this Tree's most void and hollow'd Space,
 Gideon discern'd the Idol of the Place.
 O'er a round Altar, with green Foliage bound,
 A wooden Image, with the Sun's broad Face,
 Grinn'd horrible, and with propos'd Embrace
 Stretch'd its thin Arms; with Terror-moving stare,
 And round his Head sharp-gilded Rays shot thick, instead of Hair.

Silent a-while, 'twixt mingled Grief and Shame,
 This Pageantry of Godhead he beheld;
 At last, inflam'd with bold and holy Aim,
 How long, says he, shall *Israel* thus by *Baal* be Captive held?
 How long forget their God, neglect their Fame,
 And Stones and Blocks usurp th' Almighty's Name?
 Just Heaven! ev'n now I feel thy Force inspire;
 In suddain Start of Zeal my Thoughts aspire
 To burn this Idol, with its own dim Fire:
 It shall be so! — Since, by an Angel sent,
 God has disclos'd his great Intent,
 And suffer'd me to learn the Cause of *Israel's* Punishment;
 I cannot better my first Blow begin
 Than at the very Root of *Israel's* Sin.
 So saying, o'er the dusky Paths he back explor'd his Way,
 And to an out-built Hovel came;
 Where for that Night his new-gain'd Servants lay:
 The Wretches hear him, and mistake his Aim,
 And waking start, and rub their Eyes; and trembling ask his Name.
 Be hush'd, he answer'd, you've no Cause of Fear;
 None but your Patron Gideon's here!

Rise, and assist me in a just Design,
 Or no way dangerous, or the Danger mine!
 For you, This done, I set you free;
 Your Lives you already owe to me,
 And They deserve for ever Slaves to be,
 Who dare not Much for *Gratitude*, and generous *Liberty*.
 31 Up rush the summon'd Ten with glad Consent,
 Nor weigh, nor question the Intent;
 Enough for Them, that 'tis by *Gideon* meant.
 From a rough store of Rustick Instruments,
 Which in a Corner of the Hovel lay,
 To every Hand an Axe their Leader gave,
 Bid them be resolute and brave:
 And cautious march'd in silent Speed away.
 In a fair Pasture, bord'ring on their Road,
 A Milk-white Ox in fragrant Plenty graz'd,
 Unbroken yet, and ignorant of the Goad,
 Chief of a chosen Breed, which *Joash* rais'd.
 Him first they seize, and having bound him strong,
 Drag him hard-struggling and displeas'd along.

 The Slaves, inform'd and hearten'd as they went,
 Are brought at last impatient to the Grove;
 There to a Tree th' unwilling Ox they tie,
 Then, on the pious Mischief warmly bent,
 All with contending Emulation strove,
 And labour'd, in Obedience, to outvie:
 First *Baal's* polluted Altar down they threw,
 And scatter'd wide the Pieces ev'ry way;
 Next from the jointed Steps with Toil they drew
 The massy Stones, in high-built Pile to lay,
 And with them a new holier Altar raise,
 Sacred to a Diviner Pow'r, and more exalted Praise.
 Then to the *Idol Form* approaching nigh,
Gideon his Sword in zealous Anger drew;
 Witness, he cry'd, Thou dreadful God on high!
 What for thy Sake to this false God I do.
 Now, *Baal*, if not quite deaf, hear *Gideon's* Call;
 If thou'rt indeed a God, on me let all thy Vengeance fall.
 With that he cleav'd the Image at a Blow,
 On either Side the parted Godhead fell;
 The panting Slaves with Expectation swell,
 Winds o'er the Grove shrill-shrieking Echoes blow,
 And all the *Demons* of the Place groan'd helpless from below.

 Encourag'd by their Lord, the shaking Train
 To smaller Pieces hew the chippy God;
 And on their Altar pile them, to maintain
 A Fire, which at their Leader's Nod
 They kindle with the pendant Lamp, which burnt not now in vain.

Then

Then up the Hill the waiting Ox they lead,

Even at the Altar's Foot to bleed:

The mounting Fire now blaz'd in tow'ry Pride,

When Gideon near him spy'd

An Earthen Bowl left there by Chance, or us'd in Sacrifice.

32 He fill'd it high, and on the hissing Flame

Pour'd the warm Blood, and kneel'd these Words to say:

O Gracious God! not our mean Rites despise:

By this Ablution let all *Israel's* Shame

Be from this time for ever wash'd away.

He said; and strait a rumbling Thunder roar'd,

And cross whole Heav'n with loud Enlargement roll'd.

Suddain the dazzling Gates of Light unfold,

And while the prostrate Hero Grace implor'd,

A show'ry Lustre brighten'd thro' the Trees;

The living Lights from ev'ry Quarter play,

And the Grove kindled into flaming Day;

A-while the Blaze hung o'er; but by Degrees

Rose gently, and in Distance flow'd away.

Flat the Slaves astonish'd fell,

And drown'd in the refulgent Torrent lay,

With Awe-mix'd Pleasure felt their Bosoms swell

And as th' ascending Glare unseal'd their Eyes,

Trembling, gaz'd after it to see it rise;

And wid'ning upward more and more, in foster'd Shades decay;

Recovering each on other wild they stare,

Then humbly to their honour'd Patron kneel;

Much they want Words their Meaning to declare,

But more want Patience to forbear;

Fain wou'd they, what they well conceive, reveal:

Phurah, chief among the Ten,

At last thus spoke the modest Prayer of these Afflicted Men.

Bless'd be the God of *Israel's* happy Race!

And all *False Gods* thus fall before His Face!

Never did *Baal*, to vindicate his Name,

Thus speak in Thunder, and appear in Flame.

O Glorious Man! thus just and Heav'n-approv'd!

Make us not wretched to be meanly Free:

Since thou art thus by God belov'd,

'Twere to be *Curs'd* to be *discharg'd* from Thee;

And to serve Gideon and His God is noblest Liberty!

He said, and all his Fellows join'd his Prayer,

And begg'd with pious Tears permitted Stay;

The gen'rous *Hebrew* found them worth his Care;

If you will still be mine, says he, you may:

Happy for you, that you so soon discern

The sacred Truths, which all are bless'd who learn.

Nor shall you suffer by the Lot you chuse,

Whom God invites, Man ought not to refuse.

But let us now, my new-made Friends, proceed,
And finish well the Work we well began;
Mark my Example, and dispatch with Speed.

So saying, round the Oak he ran;
And by the Fire's pale Light, which glimmer'd wide,
Saw on that Quarter, which regards the West,
That there the Boughs o'erhung the Mountain's Side,
Against whose clifly Edge the grovy Terras press'd.
Again his broad well-temper'd Blade he drew,
And gash'd with all his Strength the knotty Tree;
Then with their steely Axes, two by two,
The Men relieving swift alternate Toil,
A while with fruitless Wonder lab'ring, see

33 From the tough Trunk's big Bulk their bounding Blows recoil.
But still persisting with unwearied Will,
Wide tow'rd the Root a yawning Wound they make,
And scatt'ring Chips the bord'ring Bushes fill:
Then late the nodding Oak begins to groan,
The leafy Limbs in general Horror shake;

Bending, the one-legg'd Forest breaks, and is at once o'erthrown:
Down rolls the tumbling Monster o'er the Rocks,
And sweeps the Grove before it, with its Sway;
From Cliff to Cliff rebounds with frightful Shocks,
And gores the groaning Mountain in its Way;
Wide, o'er the Plain below, it loads the shadow'd Ground,
And grazing Herds, with stiffen'd Ears, start, trembling, from the Sound.

The End of the First Book.



REFLECTIONS

ON THE

First BOOK.



HE Notes upon the Poem are referr'd to by Figures at the Ends of the Verses. But it may not be improper to prefix some Observations concerning the general Nature of this Kind of Poem; because the Age we live in, without much Regard to *Judgment* in Poetry, has so profusely overflow'd in the *Practice*, that in common Acceptation it seems reduc'd to the Idea of a certain musical Cadence of Words; or plain and common Sense rais'd to *Harmony* by *Numbers*.

I wonder that the Gentlemen of this Faculty, since they have seldom been found less vain than was necessary, have submitted to rest satisfy'd under the Injustice of so apparent a *Lessening*: A *Poet* consider'd in this Light were so contemptible a Creature, that he must give Place to a *Piper*, who has unquestionably the Power of raising Sounds more melodious than any Adjuster of *Words* can be capable of equalling.

The Truth is, this Ductility of Numbers which many of our pretty filken Judges are so kind to, under the Name of *soft* Writing, is but a Part of the *Means* mistaken for the *End*. It was made Use of as a Vehicle by the *first* Divine Poets, to convey the Bitterness of *Instruction* with the Honey of *Delight*. (The Reader will allow a Poet, whose Profession it shou'd be to prescribe for the Mind, to talk a little like a Doctor) Its Interest in the Ear gave it Entrance to the Heart; and the golden Pill, once swallow'd, dissolv'd there at Leisure, and gradually prevail'd against those Distempers of the Mind, which, but for the pleasant Disguise it came conceal'd in, it had never been able to approach with Advantage; there being a Reluctance in our Nature which rises against Reproof, as in our Taste against Physick, when presented us too coarsely.

So far all was well; but this Witchcraft of *Softness* expos'd the Art by Degrees to the Prophanation of the Ignorant. Every Body became able to imitate the Dance of the Numbers, and few took the Pains to look deep enough for a *Meaning*. Glad were young Adventurers to find the *pleasanteft* Part the *Easiest*, and so in Procels of Time this *Handmaid* of Poetry supplanted her *Mistress*, as the treacherous Mayors of the Palace in *France* sate them down in the Throne, which they were design'd but as *Servants* to.

Having therefore address'd to the World an *Epic Poem*, so called from a *Greek* Word, which signifies to *speak*, because the Poet here speaks and relates Things in his own Person, contrary to the *Dramatic* or Stage-Poems, which take their Name from a Word in the same Tongue, that signifies to *Act*, it may not be improper for much the largest Part of my Readers, that I define *what it is*: And the rather, because I would acquit my self of Presumption in the Attempt. Our Criticks have represented it as an Undertaking so formidable, that one would be apt to imagine them engag'd in a Confederacy to scare Men from writing at all, instead of furnishing Instructions, How to write with Discernment. To make out this Charge, we shall need examine but one Witness, since he will be found in the general Sense of his Fraternity. See the Author of *The compleat Art of Poetry*, not long since publish'd.

" The *Epic Poem*, says this Gentleman, is, in the Opinion of *Vossius*, *Rapin*, and the Duke of *Buckingham*, the Greatest and most Noble in Poetry. It is, says *Rapin*, the greatest Work that humane Wit is capable of. All the Nobleness, and all the Elevation of the most perfect Genius can hardly suffice to form one such, as is requisite. The Difficulty of finding together, *Fancy* and *Judgment*, Heat of Imagination, and Sobriety of Reason, Precipitation of Spirit and Solidity of Mind, causes the Rarity of this Character's happy Temperament. It requires great Images, and yet a greater Wit to form them. Finally there must be a Judgment so solid, a Discernment so exquisite, such perfect Knowledge in the Language in which he writes, such obstinate Study, profound Meditation and vast Capacity, that scarce whole Ages can produce one Genius fit for an *Epic Poem*. And it is an Enterprize so bold, that it cannot fall into a wise Man's Thoughts, but it must affright Him.

The last Stroke of this Paragraph makes it necessary for an Attempter of Epic Poetry, unless he would lie under the Mortification of supposing himself excluded from the Number of this Author's *Wisemen*, to say something concerning the Constitution of his Subject. Under this View I am inclin'd to endeavour a Definition of the *Epic Poem*, and a short Explanation of the Parts of that Definition, in a Manner, which, disembarassing the Art of Criticism, from the Jargon of its Terms, may lay it open to the plainest English Reader, and demonstrate that the Difficulty, however considerable, is by no Means so insuperable as these Gentlemen represent it. I must venture to confess my self not altogether satisfy'd with what has been written on this Head, even by *Aristotle* himself, and much less by his Commentators, ancient or modern. Their Systems appear to me in many Particulars, too minute and restrictive; and in others again, as much too loose and excursive, all which happens to 'em from a bias'd Compliance with the Practice of two or three great Names, to whose Example they are for channelling down *Nature*, even where their Poets have most visibly relinquish'd her. They affect also a wearisome and circumstantial Pomp of Writing, to display their own Literature, and, like Horses too much pamper'd, and proud to be curvetting, raise such Clouds of learned Dust all about them, that we discern nothing clearly, but that they are too full of Mettle for the Use of a Traveller.

It must be confess'd, that Mr. *Gildon* deserves Commendation, for having in a great Measure shook off the Encumbrance of Mystery, and that stiff Perplexity of Cant which has usually cast a Shade of forbidding Affectation over the Discourses of Critics. He has rightly acknowledg'd that Languages are only the Shells of true Learning. A Comprehension of Matter, not Words, is the Treasure of a Scholar. But as the chief Tendency of his Work seems to Point at the Stage, and at Tragedy in particular, he has been less copious and distinct than cou'd have been wish'd, on the Subject of *Epic Poetry*. However, I am so sway'd by his Example, as to the Method of reducing into plain and easy English, what he treats of from the Greek and Latin Writers, that I shall quote nothing that I do not first translate, and industriously avoid all Obscurity of Terms, so as to make what I write in the Course of these Reflections, not only intelligible, but delightful to its Readers of both Sexes.

A thousand skimming Dippers into Poetry, and some of its Professors too, have been misled by our *Spencer's Fairy Queen*, and the English Translation of *Orlando Furioso*, and other Italian, French and Spanish Writers, of more Fancy than Judgment, to mistake for *Epic Poems*, any Tale told in Verse, containing a long Series of Romantic Adventures related of some Hero, who gives Name to the Composition. But there are scarce two Things in Nature which differ more widely than an *Epic Poem* from these historical Versifications. I must confess my self unsatisfy'd with *Bossu's* Definition of what is a true *Epic Poem*; and having met with no other which is so full as I cou'd wish, I am therefore forc'd upon the Endeavour of drawing a new One of my own.

" An *Epic Poem* is some noble and particular Instruction in Morality, convey'd to the Apprehension, under Shadow of some suitable single Action, feign'd or real, which Action must be illustrious and important in it self, and its Personages; interest Heaven and Hell in its Successes, and be probably, delightfully and surprizingly told in Verse, with constituent Parts or *Episodes*, ornamentally depending on, and arising naturally out of it. But in the Management of this Story, and of all the Parts which compose it, the Poet is never to have other View before him, but to strengthen by the Persuasion and Authority of Example, That one moral Lesson, which he is desirous to imprint on the Mind of his Readers.

To explain the Definition by enlarging its Particulars. A Man who resolves to undertake Epic Poetry, is not to write a History, but to propagate a Moral. *Homer*, for example, conceiv'd such a Design; it was not his Intention to write the Story of *Achilles*, or the Conquest of *Troy*; this had already been done by the *Historians*, and cou'd have contain'd nothing new but the Pleasure of Verse. Now Pleasure was none of his End, who aim'd at useful Instruction, and sought some powerful Means of insinuating to the *Greeks*, who were split into little independent free States, and as factious as *Englishmen*, that Dissension among Friends gives Advantage to Enemies, and that this can never be recover'd but by Unity and Concord. The Victory over *Troy* was at that Time discours'd of among the *Grecians* with much Vanity and Delight, as a Conquest which had cast a general Glory on their Country. *Homer* judiciously fell in with this Humour, and forming such a Story as might serve to give Example to the Moral he wou'd inculcate, borrow'd Names and Events from the Leaders, and dark traditional Rumours of that War, and so compos'd his *Ilias* for Conveyance of his Moral. This may serve as an Example, what is meant in the Definition, by some noble and useful Instruction in Morality. Had *Homer* been born some Time after, when *Alexander's* Arms shone so glorious, and all *Greece* was ennobled into Monarchy, it is probable that his Moral wou'd then have been The irresistible Influence of Power in a wise and brave Man's single Hand, and what Benefits accrue to good Subjects by Courage and Loyalty; as we see that *Virgil*, who liv'd in a Time when the Republican System of the *Romans* gave place to the Monarchical, made it the End of his *Aeneis*, to reconcile his Countrymen to the single Power of *Augustus*, under Fiction of a Prince, brave, wise and pious, who being directed

directed and favour'd by the Gods, establish'd a new Empire against all Opposition, out of the Ruins of an old One. From that new Empire which he writ of, those very *Romans* who were his Readers, deriv'd all their Glory; so that it was easy to induce them, upon a Supposition of Heaven's Will, to expect the same Blessings from this *new Change of Government*, which they had experienc'd from their Ancestors *old Change of Country*.

To impress the Moral forcibly on the Reader's Apprehension, some *Action*, that is, some *Story*, is suppos'd and related; the sole Intent whereof must be, to point out an Instance in as strong Lights as possible, where this very Moral is made good by *Example*. This Action must be *suitable*, that is, it shou'd be capable of admitting easily and becomingly, the Incidents which must be wrought into it, for producing the Example. It must be *single*, that is, there must not be several Actions which have different Ends: There may be Accidents upon Accidents, and Variety of Designs, the more the better, but then every one of them, as well separate as together, must conduce to the bringing on, and Illustration of this one main Action, which is the Example of the Work, and a Proof of the Moral. Neither is this Restriction a Nicety deduc'd from the Opinion of this or that Critic. It is a natural Necessity, and the Reason of it is evident; Actions only successive, and which produce not one another, as Causes do their Effects, raise Diversity of Reflections, and dilate and spread too thin the Attention of the Reader, whereas a Work which only drives on *one End*, to which every Part is made distinguishably conducive, consolidates and fixes the Mind to its Events, and operates more vigorously on both Memory and Understanding. No Traveller, whose Road lay directly cross *Crete*, wou'd have pass'd through the *Labyrinth*, unless Curiosity, and not Business, were the Occasion of his Journey.

The *Story* may be feign'd or real, that is, if no *true Action*, which has happen'd in History, can be adapted to the Purpose, the Poet is at Liberty to *invent* one to his Liking; for the *Truth* which is here to be taught, consists not in the Reality of the Events, but in the natural Veracity and Justness of the *Moral*; the *Story* being related for no other End, but to enforce and explain it by Virtue of the Example.

The *Action* must be illustrious and important in it self and its Personages, That is, it must be some *Story* involving the good or evil Fate of mighty *Princes* or illustrious *Commanders*; because there is no Man who will not readily conceive himself subject to those Passions and Misfortunes which have Power to master and overwhelm these high Rulers of the World: As, on the other Side, we are naturally drawn to admire all the Virtues of the Great, and to pride our selves in their Imitation.

It must interest Heaven and Hell in its Successes, because there is something so terrible and so wonderful in well-invented Representations of this supernatural Kind, that they excite a certain Reverence and Awefulness of Attention, and strike an Air of Majesty and Importance through every Part of the Subject: To which may be added the religious Obligation we are under, to attribute to God all the *Virtues* we are acted by, and to impute all our *Sins* to the Instigations of the Devil.

It must be probably, delightfully, and surprizingly told in Verse; It must be told *probably*, because whatever we consider as impossible, we think unworthy our Attention. *Delightfully*, because Variety of well-mark'd Characters, surprizing Incidents, flowing Numbers, Strength of Imagery, Sublimity of Thought, and Ornament of Expression, keep alive our Expectation, invigorate our Fancy, and hold us attentive to the Design of the Author. And it must be told *surprizingly*, because the Mind of the Reader is by nothing so much enliven'd, as by Means of an artful and astonishing Succession of Causes and Consequences.

The *Episodes* are found necessary, because they are the Members of the Action, which wou'd, without them, be too short and too general for the Dignity of this Poem; but then these Epifodical Members must ornamentally depend on, contribute to, and arise naturally out of the main Course of the Action, because they cannot otherwise be properly said to constitute Parts of it; unless as a *Wen*, though not a *Member*, may be said to be a *Part* of the Body, which swells it in Bulk, but so much to its Disadvantage, that nothing less than cutting away such a misplac'd and superfluous Excrecence, can restore that Body to its Beauty. All the Parts, Events and Incidents which are found in an *Epic Poem*, must unite with such Connexion, that the striking out or displacing any *One*, will make the Rest imperfect, and leave not a *Gap* only, but a *Wound* in the Performance; and adding any Thing to it, contribute more to its Deformity than it can to its Ornament.

The last Part of the Definition asserts, That the constant View of the Poet must be, to strengthen by the Authority and Perswasion of Example, That one moral Lesson which he is desirous to imprint on the Mind of his Reader: This needs no Explanation, for whatever has been said already, tends solely to demonstrate that the End of an *Epic Poem* is, by Relation of some great Action, with just and natural Imitation of Personages, Inclinations, Incidents, and their Consequence, to strike out the Influence of some fine moral Doctrine, on the Reader's Apprehension.

I believe I have been as distinct and comprehensive as was possible, in so short an Explanation: In the Course of my Reflections I shall be more full and particular, as Occasions may rise from the different Parts of the Poem. In General, there is nothing more capable of enlarging our Opinion of the Usefulness and Force of these *Epic Writings*, than the Consideration that they are illustriously recommended by the Choice and frequent Practice of our Saviour himself. And without a Parable spoke he not to them. Being ask'd the Reason by his Disciples, *Why speakest Thou to them in Parables?* His Answer is, *Because to you it is given to understand the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given:* That is, the Corruption of these Men's Minds, by the Habitudes of Evil, makes it necessary, that the Doctrine I wou'd teach them be cover'd thus pleasingly; for there is a Pride in their Hearts that would rebel against Conviction, if 'twere urg'd from plain Reproof and undisguis'd Instruction.

It is probable that the *Hebrews* brought with them out of *Egypt*, this delightful Way of teaching; but however that may have been, it is certain they were arriv'd to a very great Perfection in the Practice of Poetry, and of this Kind in particular, before *Greece* became civiliz'd from the lowest Ignorance of Barbarity. So far is it from true, that *Homer*, or any ancients Poet of his Country, was the Inventor of Epic Poetry. All the Prophets and Books of the *Old Testament* are full of Instances, which may serve as so many Proofs of the Skill of the *Hebrew* Poets; and the Six hundred thousand Volumes which were lost in the *Ptolemaick Library*, contain'd, very probably, many of their Epic Poems, at full Length and Dignity.

In Order to prove how little Difference there is, unless in Ornament and Extension, between the Epic Poem, as above defin'd, and the Parables I have been mentioning, their End of instructing by Surprise and Delight being evidently the same, I will select *Two* from among the Rest, and consider them as Instances; the first shall be taken from the Mouth of *Christ* himself; the other I will go so far back for as to the Government of *David*, who was King of the *Hebrews* so soon after the *Trojan War*, that he must of Consequence have liv'd before *Homer*, to whom they wou'd ascribe the Invention of Poetically teaching Morality in Fable. But I shall give more Instances than one in the Progress of these Reflections, of the unwarrantable Presumption of the little *Grecian* States, in arrogating to themselves the Invention of Arts, which they borrow'd; and even copied but faintly, from the *Asiatic* People, and from the *Hebrews* in particular.

That malicious Persecution which the Prophets underwent from the *Jewish* Priests, was what our Saviour resolv'd to lay before them as a Guilt, which wou'd draw down Heaven's Vengeance, unless aton'd by Repentance. Their Power and Pride made it reasonable to believe, that so distastful a Doctrine wou'd be preach'd to little Purpose, if not artfully insinuated: Upon this Consideration the Divine Reprover addresses himself to them, under Shadow of this poetical Fiction. "There liv'd, says he, in a certain Country, a powerful Land-Owner, who planted Vineyards, rais'd Enclosures, and built a stately Farm on a Part of his Territory, which till then had lain uncultivated: He let it out to Husbandmen, and departed himself to inhabit a distant Tract of his Possessions; the proper Season came, and the Lord sent his Servants to demand Rent from the Tenants; they flatter'd their Imaginations with their Advantage by the Distance, and instead of paying the Servants, most inhumanely murder'd them. They did the same to other Messengers, more in Number, who renew'd the Lord's Demand. Resolving at last that he wou'd try them to the utmost, he commissions his own Son to go, as a Person whom he concluded they durst not refuse to reverence. The Tenants, on his Appearance, consult among themselves, that this was the Heir, and determine to kill him, and usurp his Inheritance. When the News of this Action was brought to the Lord, he was provok'd to take Vengeance, and suddenly setting forward, came unexpectedly on the Rebels." Methinks now I hear the Interruption of the Auditors inflam'd with Indignation against the suppos'd Murderers: They have not Patience any longer to forbear crying out, *The Lord shou'd immediately have destroy'd those wicked Wretches, and let out his Vineyard to honest Husbandmen.* I see them, methinks, overwhelm'd by conscious Shame and irrecoverable Confusion! Upon short Recollection, they find themselves condemn'd by their own impartial Sentence; for as *Christ* is informing them, that the Kingdom of God shou'd be taken away from such as us'd it ill, and given to others who wou'd account for the Fruits of it, (which was the very Moral of his Story) it is noted in the Text, *That they consider'd his Parable, and perceiv'd that he spoke of Them.*

The second Instance has already been remark'd by Mr. *Gildon*. The Prophet *Nathan* resolves to reprove *David* for forcing *Bathsheba* from her Husband, and causing him bloodily to be murder'd into the Bargain; but weighing the Niceness of the Business he was upon, against the terrible Power and Majesty of the Offender, he wisely contrives to hide the Sting of his Correction under the Disguise of a Fable, and addresses the King with the following Complaint, as of an Action that had really and newly happen'd. I am come, says he, to ask Justice against the Cruelty of an Oppressor; "Two Men liv'd together, one rich, the other poor; the rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds, but the poor Man had nothing save one little Ewe-Lamb, which he had bought and nourish'd up; and it grew up together with him, and with his Children. It eat of his own Meat and drank of his own Cup, and lay in his Bosom, and was unto him as a Daughter. And there came a Traveller to the rich Man, and he spar'd to take of his own Flock, but took the poor Man's Lamb and dress'd it for the Man that was come to him."

What Effect this little Story produc'd, we are told in the Sequel. *And David's Anger was greatly kindled against the Man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the Man that has done this Thing shall surely die, because he had no Pity.* And *Nathan* said to *David*, *Thou art the Man.* And so proceeds to reproach him, that he had tyrannically given Way to the Impulse of Desire, and forc'd away the sole Wife of an innocent Subject, notwithstanding the unlimited Number of Women whom he possess'd as his own. Had the Prophet spoke thus plainly at first, it is probable it might have been of dangerous Consequence to him; but the Disguise of the Fiction having surpriz'd the Passions of *David*, into a just Sense of the Guilt, while he knew it not for his own, his Reason was asham'd to deny it, when brought nearer. *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinn'd against the Lord.* It is impossible to produce a more lively and pathetic Proof, either of the Nature or Power of Epic Poetry, which it is evident by these Instances differs nothing, but in Enlargement and Illustration, from these Divine *Hebrew* Parables.

So much for the general Nature of this Poem: I come now to the Consideration of my own in particular; and first of its Moral.

A Poet must deserve to be thought blind, if he does not discern of what Use it might be, cou'd he recommend Loyalty to a wavering Generation, by exposing the Weakness and Miseries of Anarchy. It were saying nothing to the Purpose, to object against such a Design, that we have no Occasion for it at present: 'Tis the Business of a Poet to write for Posterity: We have been so often over-run amidst civil Dissensions, by *Romans*, *Saxons*, *Danes*, *Normans*, &c. that, how unlikely soever, it is not impossible, that some future Time

Time may rise, when a general Benefit may be drawn from this sound *moral Lesson*, or it will, at least, be always capable of serving as a particular Instruction, *That Division of Power produces Confusion and Ruin, and that the Remedy is Submission to a single Authority.*

In order to cloth this *Moral* with the Shadow of *Action*, I imagine a brave People expos'd a Prey to their Enemies, by Means of Rebellion against their Prince, and a factious and irregular Administration of Government: And when all humane Likelihood or Expectation of Deliverance is lost by the Nation, they are rais'd at once from Despair, by the Union of an inconsiderable Number, under Conduct of *One Lover* of his Country, inspir'd by Heaven with a Courage, Perseverance and Wisdom to attempt and succeed in the Redemption of a People.

This being what the Critics call the *General* or *Allegorical Plan* of the *Action*, invented for a Proof and Enforcement of the *Moral*, I cou'd neither have found nor contriv'd any Story more apt for *particularising* it, than the Redemption of *Israel*, under Conduct of *Gideon*; his Proceedings are so comprehensively related in Holy Writ, as to sute in general, that is, in their Nature and Consequence, with the Purpose I chuse them for, and yet leave all requisite Scope for Embellishment and Invention in the Particulars: Whereas the History of *David*, which Mr. Cowley has chosen, is (as Mr. Rymer very justly observes) so complete, and so circumstantially describ'd in the *Scripture*, as to take from a Poet all the Liberty of his Fancy. Mr. Dryden, for the same Reason, cou'd never have succeeded in his favourite Design of forming an Epic Poem, to be call'd the *Restoration*, from the Course and Conclusion of our miserable Civil Wars. I remember he says somewhere, that King *Charles* the Second, to whom he had mentioned that Design, approv'd it very highly: But it is, I believe, to the Advantage of Mr. Dryden's Memory, that he did not attempt it. The Story was too recent to be treated as it ought; and the sublimest Beauties of Invention wou'd have lost their Force upon Readers, to whom too deep an Impression of *real Facts* must have made all *Fiction* distastful. This was the exact Case of *Lucan*; his Genius was, at least, equal to *Virgil's*, only his Judgment was deficient in the Choice of a Subject, which being yet too fresh in the Memory of his Readers, kept him under a Necessity to write rather a *History in Verse* than an *Epic Poem*. The mention of Mr. Rymer puts me in Mind of an Objection, which I think he makes unjustly, against Mr. Cowley, for his Choice of a foreign Subject, as if it were a Violation of that natural Respect which a Poet owes his Country, to look abroad for a great Character: If Mr. Rymer's Reason for this Censure is, That because *Homer* was a *Grecian* and Writ of the *Greeks*, and *Virgil* a *Roman* and Writ of the *Latins*, that therefore Mr. Cowley, an *Englishman*, shou'd have been confin'd to an *English* Hero, the Argument is too narrow and mean-spirited to be prevalent: Nature is the same in all Men and all Countries: Humanity feels every where the same Passions; and I shou'd never expect great Delight or Improvement from a Poet who has not a Soul comprehensive enough to regard the whole World but as one Society or Brotherhood: However, a good Deal more might be said by Way of Argument, in Defence of a *Hebrew* Subject, than of any whatsoever. The Reverence we conceive from the *Old Testament* for those Favourites of God, makes them every Body's Countrymen, every Body's Acquaintance; the Miracles which were so frequently and so terribly done among them, are peculiar Excitements to a Poet, and illustrate their History above that of other Nations. Their Country was the Scene of our Saviour's Life and Sufferings; a Reflection which shou'd endear it to the Veneration of all Christians: And lastly, they were either the Inventors, or at least great Improvers and Practisers of Poetry. The Song of *Moses*, their first Leader, lifts him early in the Number; *Miriam*, his Sister, the glorious *Deborah*, *David*, *Salomon*, and innumerable other great Names of their Nation, were most excellent Poets; and this shou'd certainly entitle their Memory to the Respect of such as are or wou'd be thought so among us.

The Reader, I believe, will be pleas'd with a Specimen of the Excellence of *Hebrew* Poetry, of which we meet with many noble Essays in the *Old Testament*, but they have the Misfortune to lie shadow'd under a Translation, which, by the Imperfection of our Tongue, when it was perform'd, presents to our Eye the finest Images of Nature, through a cloudy and spiritless Perspective. Yet even that Defect is an Argument to prove the divine Lustre of the Original, which can break out and shine through all with so radiant a Glory. Whoever will be at the Pains of comparing the following Specimens with their Prosaick Versions in the Bible, will find I have done nothing but endeavour'd to clear up the Sense and strong Images of the Originals. Mr. Gildon is undeniably in the Right; *There is nothing so soft, so tender and pathetick, and at the same Time nothing so grand, so majestick, so terrible, and so harmonious as the Poetic Part of the Bible*, to which, as he truly observes, *all the Heathen Verse is low and flat.*

I call this Song of *Moses*, which *Josephus* affirms to have been written in *Hexameter Verse*, a *Lyric Ode*, because it plainly appears to have been Sung, as the *Grecian* Odes of that Name were, afterwards, to the *Lyre*, *Harp*, *Lute*, or some such String-Musick, together with Dances, or certain graceful and stately measur'd Motions of the Body, as we may gather from the Text. And *Miriam* the Prophetess, the Sister of *Aaron*, took a *Timbrel* in her Hand, and all the Women follow'd her with *Timbrels* and with Dances. And when *Moses* and the Male-Singers had open'd the Ode, *Miriam* answer'd them (what they had sung before) *Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumph'd gloriously, the Horse and his Rider hath he thrown into the Sea.* I take this first Verse of the Song to be no other than a Kind of *General Head*, importing the Matter propos'd, and therefore I have begun the Ode it self, at the Verse immediately following it.

H

MOSES's

M O S E S's Song of Thanksgiving

ON THE

Overthrow of P H A R A O H in the Red-Sea.

From Exodus Chap. XV.

The First Part.

Temples and Altars let us raise !
 Our Fathers God is Ours, and claims our Praise :
 God is our Strength : God our Defence and Theme :
 At length proud Pharaoh wakes, too late, from his presumptuous Dream :
 Wakes and feels a Warrior's Hand,
 Who boasts a Power more vast than His, and Lords it o'er his Land.
 In vain the following Foes our God defy'd,
 Their rapid Wheels, in vain, tore up the Strand,
 In vain they mock'd the waving Wand :
 Not all their fierce and dreadful Host cou'd the loud Sea withstand :
 The watry World flow'd fearless o'er their Pride,
 Their drowning Army beat the foaming Tide ;
 On floating Chariots, scarce sustain'd, the trembling Captains ride.
 The plunging Horses paw'd their liquid Way,
 And round them, flound'ring in the Flood, the panting Legions lay :
 There, while they vainly felt for Sands below,
 Felt for Sands where Waves now flow ;
 Sinking, like Stones, they cloy the Deep with Prey :
 High-covering rose the briny Surge, and swept their Rage away.

Thy glorious Hand, O God ! was forceful here :
 Thy Power in Pieces dash'd the Strength that chill'd our Hearts with Fear !
 Threat'ning aloud their thund'ring Legions rose,
 And, at thy Chosen, shook th' extended Spear :
 Behind, amaz'd, we saw th' o'erpow'ring Foes,
 And felt our Fear prevent their needless Blows :
 But while Despair's cold Blast blew keen,
 Safety, from Heaven, shot down between.
 Dreadful in Wrath, Thy lifted Hand but shone,
 And all th' unnumber'd Thousands melt away,
 Consum'd like Stubble, when broad Fires roll on,
 And sweep the blazing Fields with crackly Sway :
 Th' Almighty did but breathe a short Command,
 And strait th' unlinking Surges backward rise :
 Th' obedient Waves, in quivering Mountains stand,
 And hang their billowy Horrors in the Skies :
 With hoarse Complaint, the op'ning Deep yawns wide,
 And shadowing Seas bend o'er from either Side :
 Down through the horrid Road's dark Hollow led,
 Safe o'er the naked Sands bold Israel trod ;
 Refreshful Shallows in broad sprinkling spread,
 Wash'd our hot Feet, Rock-fester'd, and unshod,
 And Israel, chearful, smil'd again, and felt her guideful God.

See ! See ! cry'd out th' unwary Foe,
 Twixt the divided Waves they go :
 The Sorcerer cleaves the Sea with magick Skill :
 Pursue, o'ertake, spoil, waste and kill :
 Now surfeit Vengeance ; now let loose your Will :
 The raging Host obey the mad Command,
 Their gleamy Swarms rush shouting down the Strand,
 Wheel within Wheel the Chariots drive, and gore th' encumber'd Sand :
 Mix'd Horse and Foot in glitt'ring Squares descend,
 And in broad Pomp their waving World extend :
 The Oose, new-peopled, groans beneath their Weight,
 And the Deep trembles at her dreadful State !
 Hark ! God provok'd in Thunder gives Command,
 Waves ! Your wat'ry Ranks disband !

See! Sounding Seas, let loose at once, pour dark from either Hand,
Hills over Hills roll bellowing down and swallow up the Sand.
Together fierce th' encountering Tempest flies,
And in white Foam the working Waves in battling Mountains rise:
Engulph'd betwixt the closing Flood th' Egyptian Squadrons roll,
With vain Reluctance spurn the Waves Control:
Mingled in Surge and covering Spray, a-while they floating strive,
Then, like sunk Plummets, bubble down, and to the Bottom dive.
Of all the Gods, what God like Ours is found?
So Holy, Glorious, Dreadful, Just? And for such Power renown'd?

It will, I think, be readily allow'd, that there is more of the Sublime in this Ode of Moses's (as well in the Poetry as in the Subject) than can be found among the Writings of any Greek or Roman Poet. Longinus is pleas'd with that Sublimity of Thought in the first Chapter of Genesis, where Moses, to express the Power of God, describes the Dawn of the Creation as starting into Being at a Word,—and God said, *Let there be Light*, and *there was Light*. I doubt with *Pere Huet*, he had rather heard of the Bible than seen it, or he wou'd never have omitted the great Images in this Ode and in many other Places. For what Comparison is there between this fine Image of Homer's, which that Critic is so proud of,

“ At every Step th' immortal Neptune took,
“ The Mountain trembled and the Forest shook!

And this of David,

Kindling at God's Approach the Mountains smoke,
And melting Worlds flow loose beneath his Stroke.

We may judge then of the Vanity of the Grecians, who far from acknowledging that they had the Practice of Poetry out of Asia, have divided the Honour of inventing this particular Kind of it, between Orpheus, Stesichorus, Alcman, Pindar, and not a few others of their Countrymen; whereas in Truth the Oldest of these, who was Orpheus, was cotemporary but with Gideon, in whose eleventh Year he went a young Man among the Argonauts, to Colchos, on that emblematical Expedition of the Golden Fleece: Now Gideon was two hundred Years after Moses, and Moses died not till the Year of the World 2454, forty-one Years after he writ this Ode, which was compos'd immediately on his setting Foot in Arabia, after crossing the Red-Sea, in the Year of the World 2413; so that the Hebrews had the Practice of Lyric Poetry, in its ultimate Perfection, above two hundred Years before the Birth of this Orpheus, to whom the Greeks wou'd attribute the very Infancy of its Invention.

Nor is there any Thing so unlikely, as that the Greeks shou'd have been acquainted with so refin'd an Art as Poetry, at a Time when they were little better than Savages, and so wholly unskill'd in the Knowledge of ornamental Arts, that St. Augustine observes the common Use of the Grape was not taught to the politest of those People, the Athenians, till by Dyonisius, or Liber Pater, in the Life-time of Moses; and a Greek Poet, wanting Wine, miss'd a surer and better belov'd Inspirer, than his Apollo. Eriethonius of Athens, first instructed his Countrymen to yoke Beasts for Plowing but in Joshua's Days; and it was then too that the Use of Letters was brought to the Grecians by Cadmus, out of Phoenicia. Before that Time they had no Alphabet, and consequently cou'd have no Writing among them: The same national Vanity is conspicuous in their Pretence, that Ira and Dactylus, who liv'd after Joshua's Death, during the Government of Othniel, first found out the Use of Iron; when 'tis plain from the Old Testament, Genesis 4 and 22, that Tubal Cain, above a thousand Years before, had taught Artificers the Workmanship both of Iron and Brass. And nothing can be more demonstrable, than from the Chariots, Weapons, Armour, and immense Magazines of warlike Furniture of all Kinds, which we read of among the Kings of Egypt and Assyria, so many Ages before, that the People of the East were most exquisitely skill'd in mechanical Knowledge before the Grecian Commonwealths had a Name among Nations. Thucydides, one of the best of their own Historians, confesses, that Greece, in the Times wherein she pretends to these Inventions, was rude and unciviliz'd, their Lands in a Manner uncultivated, their Towns few and mean, and the usual Employment of their Heroes and great Men, to commit Robberies by Sea and Land; and to steal Horses and Cattle without Shame or Secrecy.

I come now to the Elegy, justly call'd by Mr. Cowley, a most Poetical and excellent one. He design'd to have concluded his *Daveids* with it: I don't remember to have seen it attempted before; it appears to me a Master-piece of its Kind, and consists wholly of that natural pathetic Simplicity and Tenderness of Passion, which is the distinguishable Perfection of Elegy. I give it as an Instance, that the Hebrews were skilful in another Kind of Poetry, which also the Greeks, with their usual Modesty, have put in for the Invention of, long after the Time in which this was compos'd by David.

Elegy of David for the Death of Saul and Jonathan. 2 Kings, Chap. I.

O Israel! how does all thy Beauty fade!
How are the mighty fall'n! the Strong betray'd!
Ne'er may this Woe in Gath's full Streets be told,
In Askalon let none our Fate unfold!
Lest the proud Daughters of our Foe rejoice,
And Israel's Mis'ry swell their Song-full Voice!

Mountains of Gilboa, may ye drink no Dew!
 Let Rains mourn'd Want turn red your verdant Hue:
 Let your Vines wither and your Olives die,
 And your parch'd Fields no future Wealth supply:
 For there abandon'd Saul, brave Monarch, bled,
 As if no awful Oil had hem'd his Head:

Never, in vain, drew Jonathan his Bow:
 Never Saul's Sword fell frustrate on a Foe:
 Lovely and Loving, their dear Lives they led,
 Nor parted now, but lie together dead.
 Swifter than Eagles to the Fight they flew,
 Stronger than Lions they cou'd Foes pursue.

Daughters of Israel, weep the Loss of Saul:
 In Scarlet, and in Gold he cloth'd you All:
 Beneath his warlike Shade, in Peace you smil'd,
 And triumph'd by their Toils, whose Hosts he spoil'd.

Thee, Jonathan! My Brother! Thee, I mourn!
 With Grief still growing must thy Loss be borne!
 Soft and delightful wert thou to my Soul,
 We, though divided, made but one dear Whole:
 Thy Love was vast and wonderful to me,
 And never Woman lov'd as I lov'd Thee!

I have said enough, I believe, to justify my Choice of a *foreign* Action, and of a *Hebrew* one in particular: I come next to my *Verse*, where it will be found, that I have taken the Liberty of varying my Measure, and mixing together all the several Kinds which deserve the Name of *Heroic*. I was in Hopes by this Latitude, to add a Loftiness and Aptness, as well as Sweetness and Variety to the Numbers: But it being the first Time that any such Poem has been attempted in such Verse, I will therefore endeavour to defend my Choice of it, and begin by saying something in Behalf of *Rhyme* in general.

This sweetest and most harmonious Recommender of our *English* Verse, which (I shall endeavour to make it appear) no other modern Language is capable of succeeding in, has been strongly attack'd within these thirty or forty Years past, by some Gentlemen, who affecting the Reputation of a Judgment too solid to be toy'd with, are for exploding the Use of *Rhyme*, as a trifling and effeminate Jingle, unworthy the Ear of a Reader of Understanding.

Let us see what they say in Defence of their Opinion: Their Objections, I think, may be summ'd up together in the following Particulars: *Rhyme* came in with the *Runic* or *Gothic* Barbarities, and was never known to the Practice of the Ancients. *Rhyme* is *unnatural*, because it puts a Constraint on the *Expression*, to the Detriment of the *Sense*. *Rhyme* is *needless*, because *Blank Verse* is harmonious enough without it, and more Masculine and Noble.

To the first of these Objections, I answer, that it is absolutely mistaken; *Rhyme* did *not* come in with these Barbarities which they mention. The Poetry of the *Hebrews* was written with *Rhyme*: The *Persian* and *Arabian* so peculiarly depended on this Ornament, that they have a Kind of Poem among them, call'd *Cacideh*, which they derive from the ancientest Use of their Country, and therefore consecrate to the Praises of God and great Princes, containing from 50 to 100 Disticks, the two first Verses whereof rhyme together, and the others alternately, keeping throughout but two Rhymes; so that the longest of these Poems are made when they light upon such Terminations as afford most rhyming Words: There are many such *Persian* Poems of *Giami*, *Hafis*, *Schemi*, *Messih*, *Enveri*, and others of that Nation, which are but moderniz'd Essays, as our *Chaucer* by *Dryden*, the ancient Words being grown obscure, by Corruption of their Language, as *Chaucer's* by Improvement of ours: These Poems are for the most Part full of sublime Sentiments and Expressions, and might vie with the best of our *European* Performances; so that this Argument concerning the Want of Antiquity will be of no Force against *Rhyme*, and might be answer'd much more fully and particularly, but that it ought not to be allow'd, that a Thing good in it self, cou'd have been less so for its Novelty.

The second Objection, that it is *unnatural*, because of the Constraint which it puts on Expression, to the Detriment of its Sense, is *not true*, or if it were, wou'd lie more strongly against the Poetry of *Virgil*, or any of the *Ancients*, whose Verses we most admire. It is *not true*, because a Poet has not only the Liberty of changing his Rhyme, but is under an indispensable Obligation to do it, till he has made it rather an Aid than a Detriment to the Sense; and nothing can be more unfair than to lay that Objection against the Art, which concerns only the Artificer. But were it true, it wou'd lie more strongly against the best of the ancient Poets. They were under an Obligation to what they call'd *Quantity*, from the regular Disposition of their *Dactyls* and *Spondees*, and other various Feet, which need not be enumerated, some of which were short and confin'd, like those of a *Badger*; others long and loose, like an *Antelope's*; Compliance with this *Quantity*, reduc'd them to a Necessity of misplacing and interweaving their Words in a Manner which dislocated the Sense, and injur'd it much more than *Rhyme* can be capable of doing. Hear *Virgil*, for example, beginning with his,

Tityre, tu, patula recubans sub tegmine fagi;

Every Body knows, that the genuine Construction of this Line in *English* shou'd be thus, *You Tytyrus, reposing under the Shade of a spreading Beech*; but for the Sake of *Quantity*, and through the natural Stubbornness of that Language; which was not easily mellow'd down to Harmony, the *Latin* expresses it literally in this Manner; *Tytyrus, you, of a spreading, reposing under the Shade, Beech.* The Adjective *spreading*, which belongs to, and ought to have gone immediately next to the Substantive *Beech*, is in the Composition, the fourth Word before it, and this Occasions an Obscurity in the Sense to liquidate the Sound, and make it harmonious.

Let the Dislikers of unnatural and constrain'd Expression, show me any Example, where Rhyme has wrung the Sense of *English* Verse into so distortive a Posture. It is like writing in Riddles, and puzzles, instead of enlightning, the Apprehension. It will signify nothing to plead the Genius or Practice of a Language in Favour of this Custom; we speak here of what is *natural*, not what is *usual*; Nature never supplies us with Sentiments in this enigmatical Manner, and nothing, *ill* in it *self*, is the Better for being *li-cens'd*. Take another Example from *Martial*.

Casto suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pato.

This, to give it meaning in *English*, must be translated thus, — *When chaste Arria had deliver'd the Sword to her Patus*: But the *Latin*, from the Causes above-mention'd, has been forc'd to weave it thus, — *Chaste to her Sword when had deliver'd Arria Patus*. Among all the *Latin* Poets, *Horace* has been, I think, the greatest Favourite of our Enemies to Rhyme, take therefore one Example more from that Writer,

*Me doctarum hederae pramia frontium
Diis miscent superis.*

This, instead of running naturally, as the Sense requires, — *Ivy Garlands, the Rewards of learned Brows, rank me with the High Gods*, is tormented, for the Sake of *Tyrant Quantity*, into the frightful Condition following, — *Me of learned Ivy Garlands the Rewards Brows with the Gods rank high*.

No Man sure, who knowing *Latin*, must consequently know that this is the eternal Necessity of their Versification, will pretend to maintain against Rhyme, that it can be more constrain'd or unnatural, than such a warping Intermixture and Confusion of Words, which follow not progressively, as they relate to one another, and therefore express not the Images of Things clearly and successively, as they arise in our Minds, and as they shou'd be deliver'd in our Utterance, without Transposition or Perplexity, that they may sink the more easily into the Understanding of the Hearers.

Rhyme then is neither *newer* in its Practice nor more *unnatural* in its Use than the Inventions, in whose Favour these Gentlemen are for having it exploded. Let us see in the last Place, whether it will be found *needless*, from any sufficient Harmony, or nobler or more masculine Beauty or Energy in *Blank Verse* or plain Measure.

My Lord Roscommon, one of the earliest Champions for this last Kind of Scription, writes his *Essay on translated Verse*, in as good Rhyme as he was at Leisure to put together; but towards the End, becoming displeas'd with his own Performance, breaks out on a sudden into a rapturous Declamation against the Bondage of Rhyming, and recommends *Blank Verse* in a Specimen which he collects, and pieces together, from some of the most noble and sublime Parts of *Milton*. This was by no Means, a fair Manner of proceeding. The Images which shine out through the Lines he has chosen, wou'd have made any *Prose* good Poetry: They shake the *Fancy* too terribly to give Time to the *Judgment* for examining the Numbers; we are hurried away by the Sublimity of the *Thought*, and disdain to cast an Eye on the Mechanism of the Expression. Wou'd he have stated the Case impartially, he might have found a Thousand, and more Lines, in his Author, which wou'd instantly have determin'd the Question in debate, to the Reverse of his Inclination. But to discover to the Reader what Kind of Verse it is which they wou'd substitute in Place of Rhyme, take the following Pattern from the above-mention'd Lord's fam'd Translation of *Horace's Art of Poetry*.

*These are the likest Copies which are drawn
By the Original of Humane Life,
Sometimes in rough and undigested Plays,
We meet with such a lucky Character,
As being humour'd right and well pursued,
Succeeds much better than the shallow Verse
And chiming Trifles of more studious Pens.*

We shall presently discern, by only writing these Lines, after the Manner of *Prose*, whether there is any Thing in them that will maintain their Claim to Poetry. Verses, in one Sense, we may allow them to be call'd, because we have the original Derivation of the Word *Verse* or *Versus*, from the Turning back again, for the Beginning of every new Line. Observe then how this *Prose* may be unvers'd, as follows:

These are the likest Copies which are drawn by the original of humane Life; sometimes in rough and undigested Plays, we meet with such a lucky Character, as being humour'd Right and well pursued, succeeds much better than the shallow Verse, and chiming Trifles of more studious Pens.

If the Enemies to Rhyme shall produce nothing better than this in the Room of it, it will certainly *Woe* and *prosper*: To say all in a Word, there is not one of the Arguments which they use in Defence of their Opinion, but might with much better Effect serve our Cause, and be turn'd directly against them: It is a pleasant Kind of Tyranny they wou'd exercise over Reason: First, they warp to their Side all the Merits of

Harmony, and when they have apply'd all Sorts of Argument most unjustly for their Service, and left none for us, but what they think they may refuse us, as of Counsel for the Plaintiff, they would run us down with full Cry, as if we had no Weapons wherewithal to defend our selves. It puts me in Mind of a humorous Country Fellow, who came in frosty Weather to the House of a great Man, and was bark'd at by his Mastives; he stoop'd to the Ground for a Stone to defend himself, but found it frozen to the Surface: Deliver me, said he, from such unreasonable People: *They let loose their Dogs and fasten their Stones.*

Blank Verse may, perhaps, claim Preference in *Tragedy*, as coming nearer to our natural Manner of Speaking, and yet retaining just Majesty enough by Virtue of its Measure, to lift it above Prose. But the *Epic Poet*, who speaks in Person, and relates or describes at leisure, is naturally suppos'd to have Time enough for Ornament; nay, 'tis a material Part of his Business to study it with much Diligence.

Blank Verse, therefore, is no Way fit for his Use, since, unless where its Flatness is animated, as in *Tragedy*, by the Spirit of *Passion*, it must for ever be found in one of these Extreams; either degenerating to plain Prose, as in the Example before us, or becoming harsh, stiff, affected and obsolete, as in *Milton*, from a mistaken Endeavour to appear solemn and majestick. If any Thing could reconcile me to Blank Verse in Heroic Poems, it would certainly be Mr. Trapp's noble Version of *Virgil*: In Praise of which Translation it is impossible to say too much. Of his Preface and Notes I shall take the Liberty to speak otherwise, as occasion offers hereafter.

But Rhyme is the delightful Golden Mean between these Extremes. It keeps Prose at a Distance, and yet not only admits, but is a Help towards the softest *Ease* or most vigorous *Energy* of Expression; for it never was design'd as a Cramp to the *Sense*, but an enlivening to the *Sound*: And no Man will deny, that where the *Sense* can be as strong, full and free, with the Rhyme as without it, the *Sound* must strike the Ear to the Advantage of the Understanding. For besides its Spirit and a certain Liveliness, which it cannot be denied to carry with it; it also serves as a Chain to connect and bind together the Coherence of the Verses: The Memory catching readily at the *Sense* by Recollection of the Rhyme, which directs to it like a *Clue*, and leads along the Apprehension without Weariness or Difficulty.

I cannot allow of Mr. Dennis's Argument, who turns the Edge of his Axe to the Root of our Tree, and denies that Rhyme is Musick, because, says he, *there is no Harmony in Unisons*. This might better be urg'd against a Poem which shou'd terminate every Verse with one and the same Rhyme, and so approach no nearer to Harmony than one Note towards a Tune; but as the same Notes succeed twice or thrice together in musical Compositions, and then give Way to others, the artful Intermixture of all which is *Harmony*; yet any Note separately sounded two or three Times together, is *Musick*; so it is enough for Rhyme to be *Musick*, and the various Intermixture of it will afford us the *Harmony*. Besides, I am not altogether convinc'd that *Rhyme is Unison*. I believe, if that were much to the Purpose, I cou'd demonstrate a Difference.

They then who think they say any Thing to the Prejudice of Rhyme, by calling it *Jingle* and *Chiming*, produce the Windiness of *Words* against the Gravity of *Reason*. That which is Musick, even when not join'd to Meaning, can never become less when united to it. Musick is self-dependent, and wants not *Words* to recommend it. *Words* stand in need of the Assistance of *Musick* to enforce their Influence on the Memory. If then that most powerful Part of Poetry which consists in *Numbers* and *Measure*, does only by Virtue of its *Musick* convey Ideas to the Mind with Advantage, why is Rhyme, the most apparent of all Musick, thought unworthy Commendation? The one is but the Musick of Words drawn to *Measure*, the other is Musick both with and without them. *Quantity*, it is plain, our Language knows no Use of; but *Rhyme*, which has wisely been instituted in its Place, is more sweet and harmonious, more natural and effectual.

The *Latin Verse*, tormented and constrain'd as it was by its Obligation to *Quantity*, wou'd indeed have been render'd still more disagreeable by Rhyme, which, that it was naturally unfit for, we need no other Instances than have been too copiously furnish'd us by the *Monkish Essays*, for many Ages together: Take a Pattern or two to judge by, which honest Mr. Stow has made Posterity a Present of.

*Hic Vir honoratus jacet tumulatus,
Qui prudens, gratus, justus fuit & moderatus.*

And again—*Hic Vir pacificus Shipley Ricardus bumatur,
Verus Catholicus, Domus hac hoc testificatur.*

Which, to *English* it no better than it deserves, may be render'd thus:

" Here a brave Man is thrust— Down deep in the Dust,
" Who was true to his Trust— Prudent, moderate and Just.
" Poor, peaceful Dick Shipley's here left in the Lurch,
" That he was a good Catholick, witness this Church.

The *Greek Tongue*, it must be own'd, though scarce capable of Rhyme, had no Manner of Want of it: 'Twas so ductile and pliable, so sonorous and significant, that 'twas naturally adorn'd with Harmony and Fullness; and roll'd along like one of *Homer's Torrents*, down the Sides of a Mountain, foaming, mix'd through the Valleys into the Ocean of Poetry, deep, rapid and sounding in all Parts of its Passage.

Yet

Yet am I so unwilling to give up the Nobleness of our *English* Tongue in Preference of any other, that I wou'd fain set in Balance some Defects of the *Greek* Poetry, against that Advantage which must be allow'd them in the Liquidity of their Language. I am inclinable therefore to declare open War against their *Expletives*: A mean Help, which our worst Poets disdain the Use of. They are the insignificant Stop-Gaps of the lazy *Greek* Writers, and may be consider'd as the Venerable *from whence's, for to's, unto's, Ekes* and *Ayes* of those ancient Compositions. Nor can I consent to be carried down with the Current of Commentators, who remarking their Licence of intermixing the *Dialects*, for altering the Accents to the Poet's Convenience, have thought fit to miscall it an *Advantage* to their Poetry. People who were accusom'd to a Pronunciation entirely different from what was us'd in such Poems, cou'd never, in my Opinion, by any Skill in the *Dialects*, be divested of that natural and rooted Partiality which every Body conceives for *his own* Way of Speaking: And then it follows as a Consequence, that the forc'd Pronunciation was irksome to the Ear, and cast a Languor on the Attention.

An *English* Poet, for example, wou'd make *Heroic* Verse of this little Sentence.— *Learned Writers these People were.* Admit he cou'd be told, that in some of our Counties in the *North, East* or *West*, it was the Custom to speak *out*, and divide all the Diphthongs, and that therefore he might, without adding any Thing, extend the above Sentence to a Verse, by only lengthening the Pronunciation, and plead the Authority of *That County's Dialect* to read the Words in this Manner,

Le-ar-ned Writers these Pe-o-ple were.

or suppose that the Words—*Meet glorious Occasion*, were by the same Plea of Authority extended to a Verse in this Manner:

Me-et glo-ri-o-us Occasi-on.

It is visible enough that the Verses are fill'd out by this *Anglo-Gracism*. But shall the Custom of others reconcile such Harshness to our Ear? Wou'd this Practice, whatever Help the *Poet* might draw from it, give the *Reader* Satisfaction? Wou'd it deserve to be call'd an *Advantage* to our Language?

But whatever we say to the *Greek* and *Latin* Tongues, the very Faults, Turns and Fashions whereof we are prejudic'd in Favour of, by the early Acquaintance we commence with them at School; I dare boldly pronounce, that there is no Language among the *Modern*, that is comparable to the *English*. And it is plainly their Levity and want of Grandeur that disqualify them for Rhyme, so free will Rhyme be found from that Effeminacy it has been accus'd for. *Tassone* among the *Italians*, lamenting the Defects of his Countrymen's Poetry, confesses, that he knows not whether he ought to impute them most to the ill Fortune of the *Writers*, or to a certain Weakness and Want of Energy in the Language it self, which, says he, *is unfit for grave and solemn Expression*. This Defect in their Tongue, which stands acknowledg'd by their own Consent and Testimony, must chiefly arise from their Redundancy of *Vowels*, which, though it sweetens the Sound, enervates the Expression. *Italian* is the Language of *Laughing* and *Love*; it supplies with Fulness and Delight, the Domestick and narrow Uses of common Conversation, but wants *Weight*, when it comes to be dilated into Argument: 'Tis like the Flow of fine Sand in an Hour-Glass, which seems liquid and connex'd while confin'd to its little Channel, but discovers its looseness and lightness of Quality as soon as 'tis thrown abroad and expos'd to the Weather.

The Want of Monosyllables I conceive to be the Cause why the Rhymes of *Italian* Poetry give a galloping Levity to the Turn of their Verses; their *Stanza's* run perpetually after this Manner; I take the Example from their celebrated *Tasso's* *Redemption of Jerusalem*—*Capitano, Christo, — mano, acquisto — vano, misto, — santi, erranti*. Dissyllable or Trissyllable Rhymes carry with them, if I mistake not, a certain Air of Burlesque, which wou'd better become the Ridicule of a *Hudibras* than the Majesty of an *Epic Poem*.

The *French*, who lie under the same Inconveniency as to Want of Monosyllables, find some Remedy for it, in that their Accent is generally laid on the last Syllable of their long Words; by which Means their Rhymes come to terminate with more Gravity than *Italian* Words are capable of: These commonly bear the Accent on their last Syllable but one, as may be observ'd in the Example above: Take an Instance of the *French* Way of accenting, in the following Rhymes from *Boileau*.— *Amours, Discours— Uniforme, endorme— Ennuyer, psalmodier— Lecteur, Acepteur*. Here it is plain all the Rhymes depend wholly on the terminating Syllable; yet they are not careful enough to preserve this Advantage, but degenerate frequently to double Rhymes, like the *Italians*, as in this of *Boileau*,

*De la Foy d'un Chrestien les mysteres terribles,
D'ornemens egayez ne sont point susceptibles.
Et de vos fictions le melange coupable,
Même à ses veritez donne l'air de la Fable.*

*Of the Faith of a Christian, the terrible Myst'ries,
Reject the gay Dress of impertinent Hist'ries:
And the Fictions, when mix'd, though as well as you're able,
To the pure Truth itself, give the Air of a Fable.*

I have *English'd* these Lines, as near as I cou'd, to the very Cadence and Run of the *French* Numbers, to give the Reader a true Notion of their *Debonnair* Heroicks; for, if I am not greatly mistaken, there is something so distastfully gay in the skipping of their Verse, a Kind of pause-check'd Rotation, of the same

merry Motion, like the *unlacing* of a Muse, as Mr. *Hobbes* pleasantly expresses it, or like the *half Whirl* of a Spinning-wheel, that their Heroicks are as inferior to the Grandeur of our *English*, as the lightest of their *Fig-Tunes* to the Stateliness of a *Solo*. There may, I think, be discover'd in their Verse, the dapper Genius of their Nation; a Sort of spirited or animal Vivacity which dances gaily through the Fancy, without stopping at the Judgment, and with very little Regard, whether apt or impertinent.

It is needless to add any Thing concerning other modern Tongues: What has been said of the *Italian*, will effectually include the *Spanish* and *Portuguese*: The *German* must be own'd worth Regard for its *Antiquity*, but will be satisfied with the Praises which are due to its *Manliness*, without putting in for the Merits of *Harmony*. All the Roughness which *English* is thought to retain, is of *Saxon* Original; and to say the plain Truth, Poetry in *High-Dutch*, is like the *Nile* among *Cataracts*. It may be rapid and deep, but 'tis tumbling and terrible; and its Course obstructed every where by the Mountains, it must roll over. To carry Poetry farther North, wou'd be dragging her to seek Friends among her dreadfulest Enemies, the *Goths* and the *Vandals*.

The *English* alone, of all modern Tongues, is the Language of Poetry. Its *Teutonic* Monosyllables, which some have lightly blam'd it for, make it strong and comprehensive; its *Greek* and *Latin* Derivatives adorn it with copious Choice of Cadence and harmonious Terminations. It takes in Rhyme as a *Subject*, and moulds it to her Service, not obeys it, as her Tyrant: It is grave, slow, soft, stately, majestic, significant, expressive, and full of Energy. It has a Wealthiness of Phrase that is capable of furnishing all the Passions with their most extravagant Excesses, whether tender or violent. It is a rich and inexhaustible Treasury, collected from the Excellencies of every other Speech; but so aptly and so sweetly improv'd upon incorporating, that it as infinitely exceeds any one of those Tongues which contributed to its Fullness, as *Honey* the Juice of those common *Field-weeds* which the Bee's Labour drew it from.

I come now to consider the Structure of my Verse, which differs little from that which Mr. *Cowley*, toward the End of the last Century reduc'd into Practice, in Imitation of *Pindar*. I can scarce suppose it necessary to observe, that the Latitude of such diversify'd Numbers allows a fuller Harmony than the common heroic Measure, and must consequently be as preferable to it as a *Consort* to a *single Violin*. Our usual Manner of Writing in Couplets does not only satiate the Ear with the wearisome Equality, and too constant and limited Return of the *Rhyme* and Measure, but it softens the Expression too much, where 'tis necessary as it often happens, that we shou'd describe something *wonderful* or *terrible*. Whereas in this frequent Variation of Cadence and Difference of Measure, the Attention is beat up, provok'd, and kept lively: The Ear is every where reliev'd; and all Images of Actions, Sounds, or Things, how various soever they may be, are cloth'd with Language the most suitable to their Nature.

The Latitude, and something of a seeming Easiness in this Verse, have recommended it to the Trials of many of our Poets; but I am afraid their Success has not answer'd their Expectation. They have been apt to run much into the *Lyrical* Turn of short Verses, and this gives the set *Crop* of a *Round-head* to *Stanzas*, which shou'd be flowing and loose in the negligent Gentleness of the *Cavalier* Dress: *Pindaric*, in short Measure, is like a Woman of Quality disguis'd in *Knee-deep Petticoats*; she can have no *Feet* well-shap'd enough to atone for the *Indecorum*. It wears a song-like familiar Kind of Air, no Way answerable to the Gravity and Grandeur which are requisite to Subjects of Importance. The Writers of this Verse have ventur'd out, now and then, into the *Hexameter* or six-footed Line of twelve Syllables, but scarce ever launch'd deep enough, to buoy a Length of Sense on the Swell of the *Heptameter* or seven-footed Verse of fourteen Syllables. Indeed the other shorter Measure is too long, unless the Sound is fill'd out with a free Strength of Meaning; for what can be more ridiculous than a languishing Length of Verse, without Vigour in the Sentiment? Such Verses play loose like the Main-sail of a Ship, which flags and flutters heavily now and then upon the rising of a Breeze, but falls back against the Mast for Want of Wind to swell out with. It is in such Poems as these, where, as Mr. *Pope* expresses it, in Words which convey with them the painted Image of his Meaning,

*A needless Alexandrine ends the Song,
And, like a wounded Snake, drags its slow Length along.*

Mr. *Dryden*, who is willing enough to allow Mr. *Cowley* the Praise so justly due to his Introduction of a noble Manner of Writing, is, notwithstanding, of Opinion, that much was wanting to his Practice, of that Perfection which this Kind of Verse is capable of. He Instances in the Roughness and Difficulty of his Numbers, and the frequent Uncorrectness and Obscurity of his Expression. The Truth is, Mr. *Cowley*'s Ear deceiv'd him, and that which the most reverend and learned Editor of his Works wou'd represent, as the Effect of a generous Negligence or active Warmth in his Fancy, seems to me the most cool and deliberate Result of his Judgment. We may plainly enough gather it from his 25th Note to the first Book of *Davideis*, where he speaks of this Line,

Nor can the Glory confine it self in the endless Space.

By which he meant to express the Struggle of an overflowing Lustre, wanting Room, as it were, in the whole Reach of Heaven. I am sorry, says Mr. *Cowley*, that it is necessary to admonish the most Part of Readers, that it is not by Negligence that this Verse is so loose, long, and as it were, *vast*: It is to paint the Nature of the Thing which it describes, which I wou'd have observ'd in divers other Places, that else will pass for very careless Verses. Then he names, among others, these following:

*Down a Precipice deep, down he casts them all.
Like some fair Pine o'erlooking all th' ignobler Wood.*

As for his Endeavour to paint the Subject describ'd, by the Sound of the Verse, it is, questionless, one of the prime Beauties of which Verse is capable; but how far That is done by running quite out of Measure, and intermixing plain Prose, as an Ornament, among Verses, I leave to be determin'd by the Judgment of the Reader. This I am sure of, that *Virgil* is every where ambitious of this Ornament, and *Homer* was so before him; and yet neither of them has thought it necessary to their End to spoil the Numbers of their Verse, but on the contrary made them much more harmonious and flowing by this Practice. And, if I am not deceiv'd, Mr. Cowley's three Lines above-mention'd might as effectually have answer'd his Purpose, if kept within Bounds in some such manner, as follows.

*Nor finds the struggling Glory Room, confin'd to th' endless Space.
Deep, down a Precipice he casts them all,
O'erlooking, like some tow'ring Pine, th' ignobler Under-wood.*

One Fault Mr. Cowley was not careful to correct in his *Pindaric* Poems; and his Imitators have been diligent enough to keep close to his Error: He places the Pause very often in the wrong Part of the Verse; This Stop, or Breathing-place, should in the long Measures be found always in the Middle. See this Example of the Error.

Lo! How the Tears to come, a num'rous and well-fitted Quire.

There is no Harmony in this Verse, unless the Pause is made at *num-* in the Word *num'rous*; and if That is done, being in the midst of a Word, it makes a disagreeable *Hiatus*, or *Tawn*, in the Sense, and perplexes the Apprehension: How much more majestick is this Verse hereunder, though the Measure is the same, and both are Mr. Cowley's, for no other Reason but because the Pause is right plac'd in the Middle.

The Mountains shake and run about - no less confus'd than they:

Mr. Cowley appears to have been sensible of the Difficulty into which his Roughness of Numbers now and then threw the Reader; for he gives an admirable Description of *Pindaric* Verse, as He practis'd it, in his Ode on the Resurrection.

*'Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth'd Horse,
Fierce and unbroken, yet,
Impatient of the Spur, or Bit:
Now prounces stately, and anon flies o'er the Place:
Disdains the servile Law of any settled Pace;
Conscious and proud of his own natural Force,
'Twill no unskilful Touch endure,
But flings Writer and Reader too, that fits not sure.*

This was certainly the Condition in which He left *Pindaric* Verse; but had he liv'd to have given the finishing Hand to what he so successfully introduc'd, he would probably have so far chang'd his Practice, that it had been more nearly describ'd in the following Verses on the same Subject, which I find in his Ode on Liberty; and alter but a Word or two, to fit them for an Idea, which one might conceive of this Verse in its Perfection.

*The plain Heroic Strain let Others take,
Mine the Pindaric Way I'll make:
The Matter shall be grave, the Numbers loose and free,
It shall not keep one settled Pace of Time;
In the same Tune it shall not always chime;
Nor shall each Verse, just to his Neighbour, rhyme:
A thousand Liberties it shall dispense,
But yet shall manage all without Offence,
Or to the Sweetness of the Sound, or Greatness of the Sense.*

Though none, that I know of, has in any *Epic* Attempt made use of this composite Verse, for *Pindaric* it cannot well be call'd, as not frequently enough admitting the short Measure of the *Lyrics*; yet it has been practis'd in *Dramatick* Poetry two thousand Years ago. *Aristotle*, in the first Chapter of his *Poetics*, quotes a Work of *Cheremon*, the *Tragædian*, a Scholar of *Socrates*, which, he says, was call'd the *Centaur*, and compos'd of all the different Sorts of Verse; though afterwards in his 25th Chapter he seems to disapprove such a Practice for *Epic* Poems, because the *Iambic* and *Tetrameter*, and such like short Measures, are too skipping and light for the Dignity of so grave and majestick a Poem. Our Language carries with it a natural Gravity, and allows of short Measure with more Weight than the *Greek*; but I am so much of this great Man's Opinion, that I use it but little, and that only where I think it helps the Grandeur, as effectually as it does the Harmony.

That I have divided this Poem into *Twelve Books* was a Determination, I believe, of so little Importance, and which depended so entirely on my Choice, that it were a kind of Impertinence to offer a Reason for it. These are Matters merely indifferent, and in which it were too servile a Punctuality for a Poet to strengthen his Practice by the Example of others. The Extent of his Work should be a Guide to his Judgment. Mr. Cowley professes the Imitation of *Virgil* as his Reason for designing *Twelve Books* to his *Davideis*; tho', I think, he might as justly have rejected *Virgil's* Method, as *Virgil* did *Homer's*, whose

Number of Books too, methinks, the Roman might with more Grace have borrow'd, than his *Episodes* and *Incidents*. Sir William D'Avenant starts out of this imitative Road into the quite contrary Extreme: He is neither for Books, Proposition, Invocation, nor Machinery: He puts me in mind of our stiff-hearted *Sectarians*, who go bluff to a Sermon with their Hats on their Heads, in Defiance of Church-Ceremony: He has divided his *Gondibert* into *Acts* like a Tragedy; and each of these *Acts* into *Canto's*, which are to serve for the *Scenes*: This Method Mr. Hobbes, in his Prefatory Epistle, has endeavour'd to justify; yet I cannot approve of a Way so far remov'd from the General Practice, and making too near Approach toward the Form of a Poem, which its Nature is distinct from. In Matters wholly indifferent the Old Way is the best, and to change it without Cause may deserve to be censur'd, not as a Novelty, but as the empty Affectation of it. For my Part, if the Division of this Poem into Twelve Books requires other Reason than because I found Matter for that Number, I think it may well enough be justify'd from the Division of that People, whom it treats of, into *Twelve Tribes*, or *Bodies*. And now, having premis'd what I thought might be necessary, I hasten to the Explanatory or Occasional Reflections, which arise more particularly from the Sections of the Poem, and are mark'd, and referr'd to, by numerical Figures.

I shall only insert first a short Observation concerning the Title, or Name of an Epic Poem. When the Hero is not only in Action, but also in Quality, the chief Person of the Poem, in that Case his Name alone may give Title to the Work, as *Aeneas* to the *Aeneid*, and *Ulysses* to the *Odysses*. But when there is in the Poem a Quality superior to that of the Hero, the Poet must either add something, which may signify the Action, or derive his Title from the Place in which it happen'd. Thus *Homer*, tho' the Hero of his *Iliad* is *Achilles*, has not call'd his Poem the *Achilleid*, because in Quality *Agamemnon* was his Superior.

In This Poem *Gideon* restores the rightful Monarch of *Israel* to the Exercise of his Power; The Monarch then is his Superior in Quality. I have therefore compounded the Title from Place, Action, and Hero together, and call'd it *Gideon*, or the *Restoration of Israel*. The *Redemption of Israel* might have done as well, but that it would only have regarded the Deliverance, and not included the Establishment, which last was the proper End of the Action; the Deliverance being only the Means, by which the Hero was enabled to give Force to his Resolution, for determining the Action, as he pleas'd. The *Restoration* is also an authoriz'd Scripture-Word, applied frequently to the Deliverances of *Israel*, in *Isaiah*, and many other Books of the *Old Testament*.

That there was such a Prince, and that *Gideon* so restor'd him, it lies upon me to prove, when Occasion offers in the Sequel. But to take off a little of the Surprize, which such a Declaration may give to many, I will previously insert a few Words from the eighth Chapter of *Judges*, Verse 22. — Then the Men of *Israel* said unto *Gideon*, Rule thou over us, both thou and thy Son, and thy Son's Son also; for thou hast delivered us from the Hand of *Midian*. But *Gideon* said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my Son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.

Nothing can be weaker than to suppose, that the Word *Lord*, in this Place, relates only to their general, or religious Dependence upon God; in That Sense the Lord rul'd over them before, and would have done so, notwithstanding the Temporal Royalty of *Gideon*, had he accepted the Dominion, which they offer'd him.

I shall therefore make it plain, in the Course of my Reflections, that this Answer of *Gideon's* can be understood no way but thus — It is a rebellious Presumption, O ye People of *Israel*! to offer me a Power, which is not yours to bestow; neither I nor my Sons will usurp the Right of another. God has given you already an Hereditary Line of Princes, your Obedience to whose Race was enjoin'd you by the Laws, which were originally given you. God, by the Mediation of your Natural Sovereign, will listen to your Call, and govern you by the unerring Influence of his Spirit. I, as General or Lieutenant to this Sovereign, will lead on your Armies as long as I live; and question not but to continue you victorious, and triumphant. But as for the Supream and Hereditary Authority, I will restore it to that Line, your Defection from which has drawn down God's Vengeance, and been the Cause of all your Miseries! And such a Lieutenant, or Deputy, *Gideon* actually became; and nothing farther is meant, where we are told, that he judg'd *Israel* forty Years. And such a Deputy too was *Joshua*, who so long and so gloriously fought the Battels of the Lord; which Expression is a comprehensive Declaration what kind of Power *Joshua* exercis'd over *Israel*. But more of this hereafter.

1. Seek, O Soul! some Heav'nly Theme. Tho' it was the Custom of the Greek Poets to mix in one the Proposition and Invocation, and of the Latins, and all the Moderns, to propose first their Subject, and then invoke the Assistance of a Muse; yet I am perswaded it will better become a Christian Poet to begin with the Invocation, as a Manner more solemn and proportion'd to the Majesty of our God, not only to pray his Inspiration for acquitting ourselves well of the Subject we have undertaken, but even in the Choice and Direction of the Subject itself. That the Invocation, one way or other, is of absolute Necessity to the Poem, may appear from these Reasons; 1. A Work, whose Foundation is a moral Instruction, owes a Reader, says *Bossu*, the Example of Piety and Veneration. 2. Many Things are describ'd in the Course of a Poem, which it is not to be suppos'd shou'd be known, but by Divine Revelation. It was therefore rashly done of Sir William D'Avenant to take away this Portico, which not only added a certain Grandeur of Appearance, but was essentially to be esteem'd as a Part of the Building.

2. Redeem the Use of Captive Poetry. Every Body knows, that the Original of Poetry was the Worship of God, and the Celebration of his Glory. It is equally notorious, how degenerate it is now become in the beggarly Flattery of great Men, as Mr. Cowley observes: Its idolizing the Women. I could much more readily forgive it. To redeem the Use of Poetry then is to restore it to the Praise of God's Wonders, the Advancement of Virtue, and the Glory of Humane Nature.

3. Dethron'd

3. *Dethron'd their Heaven-appointed Chiefs, and rovd in Freedom's Chace.* Among many ill Arguments, which are brought against Kings by the Champions for Popular Government, I can't help being rather provok'd than convinc'd by that modest Affirmation of theirs, that God is of their Party; and declar'd himself so by giving Preference to the Republican System, when he prescrib'd to his chosen People the Form of their *Common-wealth*: That he submitted his own Laws to the People's Confirmation, and became their *Civil Magistrate* by meer *Covenant and Condition*: That when afterward these *Subjects* found it fit to *depose* God Almighty from his Temporal Authority ('tis the very Word which *Oceana* and many other of their Treatises take the Boldness to make use of) and to choose themselves a King, who should reign over them in his stead, God repented only their Ingratitude, and allow'd of their *Right* in declaring to *Samuel*, *It is not Thee they have rejected, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over Them*; and that, when he resolv'd to give them a King in his *Wrath*, it was as if he had said, These People are *ungrateful*, and deserve to be punish'd for deposing me from my *Ministry*, since they have been prosperous under it; not indeed, that I can say they were *unjust*, having only made use of their *natural Liberty* to choose their own Governour, and whether they will be govern'd at all, or *no*: But since they were not wise enough to know when they were well, they shall have a King, that they may be enslav'd and misus'd into a Sense of the Happiness of a *Common-wealth*, above that of *Monarchy*.

This being the general Sense of one of their strongest Arguments, 'twill be pulling down a Pillar of their Political Fabrick to show, with as much Brevity as possible, that the first Government of *Israel*, as appointed by God, was no *Common-wealth*, but an *absolute and Hereditary Monarchy*: That the People's Confirmation was never necessary to the Establishment of their Laws: That all the *Hebrews* Miseries, and those frequent Enslavements, which for 300 Years together they from time to time fell into, and were redeem'd from by their *Judges*, were the natural Effects of their Rebellion, and renouncing their Allegiance to their Hereditary Sovereigns, and no other than the common ill Consequences of that Weakness and Division, which is inseparable from all Governments founded on *Common-wealth* Principles. And lastly, that God was so far from submitting to be *depos'd*, or allowing any Right of that kind in the Body of the *People*, that he never more strongly asserted his Sovereignty than in the very Act of his Assent to their Demand of a King, and gave them one in *Wrath*, not because *Monarchy* was a Government he dislike'd, but because after it had been prescrib'd and enjoin'd them by Himself, they had rebelliously taken upon them to dethrone the Race of Kings whom God had appointed them, and insisted on a Right to choose another for themselves, as if there had been a Negative, or Reserve, in their Loyalty.

If this can be made out, it will stand as a Proof, that God establish'd not the Maxim, *That Supremacy of Power is in the Body of the People*; since that Divine Anger, which brought on the bloody Reigns, broken Lines and interrupted Succession, so much quoted as Examples among the *Hebrews*, as also the final Destruction and Extirpation of that People, was kindled against them on no Account so visibly, as because they withdrew their Allegiance from the Kings whom God had given them, and set up a Claim of *Electing* who should rule them. And all this, if I do not extreamly deceive myself, I shall be able to make good, not from Reason and Argument only, but from unanswerable *Authority and Demonstration*, in my Reflections on the following Books of the Poem, where they will come in more properly, when the Prince, in whom the Right then lay, is call'd forth to the Exercise of it by the Loyalty of *Gideon*.

4. *Then Gideon, bold and generous Leader! rose.* From this Line to the End of the Section is included the Proposition, that is, the *Action* propos'd to be describ'd in the Poem. It is first *general*, undertaking to teach in the Example of *Gideon*, that the Favour'd by God have no Reason to fear any Strength they are to oppose, since no Instruments or Means in God's Hand can be too low, for Accomplishment of the most dangerous and important Undertakings: That there is no Comparison betwixt the wholesome Effects of Power in a single Hand well-qualified, and of the same Power divided among many: And then it comes close to that *particular Action* which is propos'd, and declares it to be *Gideon's* redeeming *Israel* by his magnanimous Loyalty in restoring a deliver'd People to their Prince on their old Foundation of Government, when his Rebel-Country, in joint Despair, had submitted to foreign Slavery.

The Critics raise a terrible Dust in their Arguments after what manner a Poet should open his Proposition: I can heartily agree with them, where they recommend *Modesty and Brevity*; but I would have them, methinks, include *Fullness* as more necessary than either. I can be as angry with *Statius*, as *Father Bosse* is, for his encumbering the Proposition of his *Achilleid* with Assertions, that his Hero had frighten'd the Thunderer; and with personal Boasts, how nobly he (the Poet) had exhausted his former Inspirations, inasmuch that *Thebes*, sung by him, would have Reason to adore him as her *Second Founder*. In the just Dislike of all this we are perfectly agreed, but I cannot so entirely approve of that *minute* Inquisition into all the casual Practices of *Homer and Virgil*, and then, deducing an Authority, to propose them as *Examples*: Nor can I acquiesce in his Judgment, that the Dictates of *Horace* are of so determinating a Weight on this Head, since he has sometimes, in my Opinion, mislaid the whole Tribe of Critics, and in particular is mistaken, or has ill-express'd his own Meaning, in this Caution about Propositions.

Do not begin, as that old Scribler did,

Priam's proud War and Fate I mean to sing:

What (worth such Noise) produc'd this bellowing Bard?

How much more just spoke Homer, always wise?

Muse, paint the Man, who after Troy's great Fall,

Manners, and Men, and num'rous Cities saw!

Not Smoke from Fire, but Fire from Smoke, he draws,

And from this Flat, to dreadful Wonders, towers,

To barking Scylla's, Cyclops, and Charybdis, &c.

In the first Place, I see no Reason why, because one Man undertook to describe the *War of Troy* and *Fate of Priam*, and was not equal to his Enterprize, another therefore should be debar'd from proposing the same Subject. And as to the manner of making the Proposition, in which the Author above-meant is by *Horace* accus'd of Noise and Ostentation, as if he rais'd too great a Hope by promising to sing *Troy's Fall*, and the *Fate of Priam*, I am frank enough to confess, that the Fault, if there is any here, lies too deep for my Discernment: Pray, what could an Author, designing that Subject, have contriv'd to say less, when he was about to propose it? Where is the too much *Fire* in the *Beginning*? The *Smoke* in the *Progress* is nothing to our Purpose: Why is there more Pomp express'd, or Expectation rais'd, from a Promise to write the Ruine of *one Town*, and Death of *one Man*, than to show the *Manners* of *many Men*, and treat about the Affairs of *many Cities*? If we were not to expect some Account not only of what *Ulysses* saw, but also why he saw it, to what End then were we told of it in the Proposition? If we were to expect it, our Expectation is most certainly rais'd higher by *Homer's* Assurance, that we shall hear various Accounts of many Cities and many Men, than it could have been by the *Other*, who propos'd but to set before us the Fall of *one City*, and *one Man's* Destruction.

There is a *Narrowness*, methinks, in the Schemes of these Commentators. They understand and obey their *Authors*, with a Submission too implicate for our Champions of *Liberty* to allow their best *Princes*. They admire in the gross, and are obstinately determin'd to distinguish no Absurdities. I am myself too an Admirer of *Horace's* Criticism, yet I cannot help thinking he would have instructed us better by some intelligible Precept concerning *Propositions*, than he has done by the Comparison of his two Examples above-mention'd: To conclude this Reflection with my own Notion of the Matter; He certainly proposes well, who comprehends in his Proposition the whole Extent of his Meaning, and adds nothing beyond it; and he as certainly errs, who, being needlessly terrified by *Words* without *Reason*, is kept back by a servile Apprehension of saying more than *Homer*, *Virgil*, or *Horace* would have lik'd, and so perhaps contents himself with proposing so little, that nobody, who reads the Beginning of his Poem, shall find Encouragement to go further.

5. *Not to the prosperous Present poorly kneel.* I would not be misunderstood in this Place, as renouncing Regard for the Times I live in, or for any of our great Men, whose large Fortunes however have contributed, at least as much as their large Minds, to the Title they possess of *The Patrons of Poetry*. All I mean is, that I think it too low a Condescension in a Poet to confine his Views to the Hopes of little Interests from the Favour of the Powerful: His Business, as I take it, in Writings of this Nature, being rather to administer some Comfort to the Afflicted, than to be always congratulating the Successes of the Fortunate: He ought not to guide his Ends by the Humours, Inclinations, or Interests of the Age in which he writes: He should look down through Posterity, and rather please himself with the Hope that his Work may encourage and be of Service to some suffering Virtue hereafter, than with Endeavours to render himself grateful to the Taste of a Cotemporary Grandeur, which sometimes perhaps may reward him for his *Merit*, and much oftner for his *Flattery*.

6. *Who knows but we may see again, what once amaz'd we saw!* This reduces the general Expressions foregoing to a particular Hint, in what Case it were possible for such a Moral, as this Poem contains, to become a National Comfort: We have the Instance I point at in our own History. Every Body remembers how the innocent Son of our late Royal Martyr, King *Charles I.* liv'd contemptibly in Exile, attainted as a Traitor, while his Throne was possess'd by a Triumphant Usurper: His Condition was hopeless, as to all human Likelihood, 'till God rais'd a Hand, where it never was expected, to restore him to his People, and recover the Nation out of Misery and Despair to all the Triumphs of Glory. Who knows therefore, says this Part of the Poem, whether such a future Time may not arise, when a King and his People shall suffer in like Manner? Such Misfortunes as these are unlikely, 'tis acknowledg'd, and it is to be pray'd and hop'd, will never again be the Case of our Nation. But be it in ours, or another, the Sufferings of any Part of Mankind claim the Pity of the whole; and if ever it should come to pass, no matter in what Age, or in what Country, that a true and rightful Prince shall undergo such a Trial, there is no Doubt to be made, but He were the fittest Person upon Earth for this Poem to be address'd to. I am perhaps the first Poet, who has thought it worth his while to throw away a Dedication on so unprofitable a Patron as *Futurity*; and yet after all, as little as it is regarded, there are few of our Tribe who meet Reward from any other, let them address to whom they please.

7. *Now from the swarming East, for seven long Years,*

Had restless Midian pour'd her swarthy Hosts. What People these *Midianites* were, into what Nations divided, how govern'd, and where seated; as also who are now their Descendants, I shall take Occasion very largely and particularly to describe, in my Reflections on the Second Book: All I shall say of them here is, that they had wasted and over-run *Israel* for seven Years; in the last of which, about the time of Harvest, the Poem takes Beginning, that so the necessary Unity of the Action may be preserv'd, by relating only their *Redemption*, and not accounting also for their Invasion and Overthrow, which had been Actions distinct, and must have destroy'd the Regularity of an *Epic* Poem. 'Tis for this Reason only that *Homer* commences his *Iliad* in the Tenth Year of the Siege, and *Virgil* his *Aeneid* in the last Year of *Aeneas's* Voyage. They had else been perplex'd with Redundancy of Matter, which would have obscur'd and confounded the Designs of their Poems.

8. *Old Amalek; the marching Hebrews first and surest Foe!* What Nation this was, and how numerous and mighty, shall be told both Geographically and Historically in the Reflections on the next Book: They were the *Hebrews* first Enemies, because they attack'd them without Provocation in their March thro' the *Wilderness*, on their coming out of *Egypt*, but they were beaten by *Moses*. I call them also their surest Foe, because the *Israelites* receiv'd a particular Command from God, that they should never make Peace with the *Amalekites*, but pursue them with endless Hatred, 'till they had rooted them out from the Face

of the Earth. This at last they accomplish'd, or were very near doing it, but many hundred Years past first: God appear'd, remembring the Injustice done his People by this Nation, when the *Israelites* themselves show'd a Willingness to forget it; as may be observ'd in the very severe Judgment denounc'd by *Samuel* against *Saul*, three hundred and fifty Years after, only for the Pity by which he was inclin'd to save *Agag*, a King of that People. The Compassion itself was a generous and manly Virtue; what occasion'd the Sin was the wilful Disobedience, showing Mercy to *Amalek* against the positive Manifestation of God's Command to the contrary.

9. *Their heavy Harvests load the plund'ring Foe.* It appears from the Story of this War, as it is describ'd to us in the Book of *Judges*, that it was incurfiv and predatory; the *Hebrews* (after perhaps a Year or two's Contest) abandon'd the Plains and open Country, and secur'd themselves in their Fastnesses, among the Woods and rocky Mountains, while the Enemy, maintaining Winter-Quarters in certain Cities which they preserv'd for that Purpose, made Excursions in Summer to destroy Harvests, burn Houses and Towns, and carry off Plunder, People, and Cattle, as they fell into their Possession.

10. *Where Half Manassa's Tribe their Portion found.* The River *Jordan*, which rises in the Northern Parts of *Palestine*, runs almost strait South the whole Length of the Country: Nine Tribes and a Half of the Twelve, by the Division which *Joshua* made of the Lands he conquer'd, had Possession allotted them of all that Tract between the West Shore of *Jordan*, and the Neck of the *Mediterranean*, or more properly the *Levant*, or *Syrian* Sea, (saving only that the Coast itself, and a Breadth of some Miles inward, was possess'd by the *Philistines* and the rich trading People of *Tyre* and *Sidon*) The other Two Tribes and a Half, being those of *Reuben*, *Gad*, and one Half *Manassa*, held the Country lying Eastward along *Jordan*, which was conquer'd first of all by *Moses* himself from the *Amorites* and their *Allies*. But that Half Tribe of *Manassa*, which is meant in this Verse, had their Portion on the West-side of *Jordan*: It was a long Strip of Land, which, being very narrow, reach'd from the River's Brink betwixt *Issachar* and *Ephraim* almost to the Sea-Coast before-mention'd. On a Mountain toward the East End of this Strip of Land, within Sight of *Jordan*, stood the City of *Ophra*, the Birth-Place of *Gideon*; which was safe from the Insults of an Enemy by its impregnable Situation: At the Foot of this Mountain open'd the large, lovely, and fruitful Valley of *Jesreel*, where the whole *Midian* Army lay encamp'd, at the Time from which the Poem takes Beginning. This Valley has been the Scene of many terrible Victories; it was there that *Gideon* overthrew the *Midianites*; *Saul* the *Philistines*; *Ahab* the *Syrians*; and in more modern Times, the *Tartars* the *Saracens*.

11. *This Tree a Shade o'er Half the Mountain cast.* That there was a Tree with a Bench under it before *Joash's* House I have the Testimony of the Bible, which says, that an Angel of God came and sat there. But that it was so large, or so old a Tree, is a Poetical Discovery: That it was remarkable for its Size and Situation appears however from its being so particularly taken notice of in the Story; but because I have suppos'd it some hundred Years old, and yet in full Flourish, it may be necessary that I say something to the Honour of these venerable old Children of the Earth.

Pliny tells us of Oaks, which were growing in his Time, suppos'd to have been coeval with the World itself: Their Roots, says he, were united, and rais'd into Arches like the Gates of a City; and the Earth, which was swell'd round about them, look'd like Mountains. *Josephus* makes mention of a Turpentine Tree, that was thought too as old as the Creation. Mr. *Maundrel*, in his Journey to *Jerusalem*, affirms, that he measur'd one of the yet-remaining Cedars of *Lebanon*, and found it above twelve Yards round the Body; and that at almost one hundred Foot high it spread out into five several Limbs, each of which would have made a great Tree. Sir *Francis Drake* reports, that he measur'd a Mastic-Tree in one of his Voyages, that was four and thirty Yards about. It is easy to infer, that these vegetable Giants must have born up the Growth of no small number of Ages: St. *Jerom* relates, that he saw the Sycamore-Tree which *Zacchaeus* climb'd into to look upon our Saviour, when he rode in Triumph to *Jerusalem*. Mr. *Evelyn*, in his *Sylva*, remarks from his own Knowledge a pleasant kind of Privilege, which is annex'd to a Reverend old Oak which has been Time out of mind the Honour of *Knoll-Wood*, near *Trely-Castle* in *Staffordshire*; the Shade of its Boughs, he says, is very ample, and in Respect of its Antiquity, whoever will make Oath, on the Birth of a Child who is to call no Body Father, that this Child was begotten within any part of its Shadow, the Offence is no longer under Cognizance of the Magistrate, either Civil or Ecclesiastick. Mr. *Lawson*, in his Treatise of *Orchards*, gives reasonable Arguments to prove, that a Pear-Tree may live to be a thousand Years old: And in fine, if the Age of Mankind before the Flood was from 600 to 900 Years, it is easy to imagine, that an Oak, of a Substance so much more durable and solid, and subject to none of the Dangers and Diseases which weaken humane Bodies, may be capable of living many thousand Years, where the Soil is well adapted, and no Accident intervenes for Prevention of its Progress; and so much I thought fit to subjoin in Defence of the Age, which I have given to that Oak, under which I place *Gideon* at Day-Break, looking down upon the Camp of *Midian*.

12. *The Morning rising over Israel's Spoils.* The Description, which begins with this Line, I have taken some Pains to make natural and agreeable; but I would not have the Reader suppose, that I introduce it for the sake of its Ornament only. Descriptions are certainly the Life of *Epic* Poetry, and it is there, as *Boileau* well observes from the Authority of a much better Judge, that a Poet should lavish all his Fancy and Rhetoric; but then, if they serve for no end but *Delight*, they occasion the Poem to grow languid; for the main Action cools, while the Reader is busied in such foreign Diversion. *Bossu*, who writes much, says but little to the Purpose in his Chapter of Descriptions: I am satisfied more fully with Mr. *Dennis's* short Remark in his Discourse against Prince *Arthur*: "Descriptions, says this Gentleman, must never be made in an *Epic* Poem, unless they are necessary, which they never can be but in one of these two Cases; either, where they are requisite for giving us a reasonable Account of some Part of the Action, whereby to make it probable; or secondly, when they serve to imprint some important Circumstance more strongly on our Minds." Mr. *Dennis* in this Place has very justly and comprehensively said all that is

needful to be said upon the Subject. And this Description of the Day-breaking over *Gideon*, as he lies under the Oak, is plac'd here with Design to imprint very strongly on the Reader's Imagination not only the Posture and Situation of the Hero, but all the Prospects before him, in order to fill him with so local an Idea, as that fancying himself as it were in *Gideon's* Place, the Reflections, which arise in the Hero's Mind upon the Objects before him, may alarm in like manner the Passions of the Reader. We see every Day in common Life plain Examples what a Force local Knowledge strikes the Mind with: He, who has seen *Edge-Hill*, *Newberry*, and *Naseby*, will find himself infinitely more touch'd, while he is reading our Historical Accounts of the Battels which were fought there during that detestable Rebellion in the last Age, than any Other can be, who reads the same Accounts without ever having seen the Situation of the Places, because this last would conceive but an imperfect Idea of that local Distinction, which enlivens the Description to the other's Apprehension.

13. *A winding Rivulet roll'd its pebbly Way.* The Reader should here call to mind the Example of Mr. Cowley, and caution himself against mistaking for a Fault the studied Roughness of this Verse, which was design'd to represent in the very Sound of the Words the broken and murmuring Motion of a Brook, making its way among the Pebbles and Flint-stones, which delightfully retard the Course of these noisy little Rivulets. For a like Reason I design'd, as an Ornament, that Slowness which will be discern'd in the next Line but one after it; and it is in general a Beauty, that I have with some Ambition endeavour'd at in every Part of the Poem.

14. *Here and there, high-mettled Steeds.* The Use I make of *Horse*, in the Actions of this War, being frequent and considerable, I will take Occasion from my first mentioning them in this Place to assert the Use of Cavalry in the Wars of the *Hebrews*, which some might else be apt to censure, as not in Practice so early; and the rather, because *Homer*, who writes of a War which was much later, speaks nothing of Horsemen, but describes that noble Creature no otherwise than as harness'd to the skirmishing little Chariots of his *Greek* and *Trojan* Heroes. How this happen'd in *Homer* I am not able to account for; that his Countrymen were then unskillful to back Horses, I can easily believe, because it was but a little before that they had mistaken the first Horsemen they ever saw for Compound-Creatures, Half-Men Half-Horse, and given them the Name of *Centaur*s, from the Business they came about, which was stealing their Cattle; but that this should have been also the Case of the *Trojans*, is what I cannot so readily admit the Belief of. *Troy* held the Empire of *Asia Minor*, and drew Allies to her Assistance from so many different and distant Places, that it is impossible to suppose they could be unskill'd in the Art of Riding, when for so many Ages before, the Wars of *Asia* had been dreadfully distinguishable for the Number of their Cavalry. *Ninus*, the Founder of *Niniveh*, enter'd *Bactria* with two hundred thousand Horse, besides his Chariots, which were above a hundred thousand. *Semiramis*, his Wife, who was the Builder of *Babylon*, invaded *India*, says *Suidas*, with a Million of Horsemen; and of Chariots arm'd with Scyths at the Ends of their Axle-Trees, about a hundred thousand also.

It is allow'd, that such Numbers of Horse in those very early Ages may probably have been over-rated by the Errors of History; but that makes nothing against my Argument, which relates only to the Antiquity of using Horsemen in War. If therefore the *Affyrians* so abounded in Cavalry, it is past all Dispute, that the bordering Nations must also have us'd them, and could not have come so far from the East to invade the *Hebrews*, without great Numbers in their Army. As for the *Hebrews* themselves, the Scripture is full of Instances how early they were good Horsemen; and it had been strange indeed to find them otherwise represented, when we remember that they came out of *Egypt*, where *Pharaoh* was so generally skillful and powerful in Arms; and so particularly abounded in Cavalry, that he pursued them to the Red Sea with fifty thousand Horse, says *Josephus*, and two hundred thousand Foot, besides all the Chariots of *Egypt*.

15. *In other Parts the Scyth-arm'd Chariots, driv'n.* Concerning these Chariots, an antient and terrible manner of fighting, I shall speak at large in the Reflections which follow the second Book, where I intend to describe the Chariots themselves, and the manner of using them, and to consider the Effects which they were capable of producing.

16. *The tortur'd Drums and sprightly Trumpets join'd.* The Drum, though differing in Shape and manner of use from the present, as not being beat with Sticks, but with the Hand at both Top and Bottom, and ornamented round the Rim with little jingling Plates of Brass, is certainly of very antient Original; having been found among the *Chinese*, at their first Discovery, by the *Europeans*: But as for the Trumpet, there are so many open Proofs of its Antiquity in holy Writ, that I am surpriz'd at Mr. Pope's Affirmation among the Notes on his *Homer*, that it was not invented in the Time of the *Trojan War*. The *Trojan War* was about the Time when *Abdon* judg'd *Israel*; and Trumpets were so long before in Use among the *Hebrews*, that the *Ark* was never remov'd, nor a Congregation summon'd, but by the Sound of this Instrument. They had a remarkable Feast, which was call'd the Feast of Trumpets; the Walls of *Jericho* fell down at the Sound of *Joshua's* Trumpets. *Gideon* blew a Trumpet, and all *Abiezer* was gather'd after him. *Moses* in the very Wilderness directs the making Silver-Trumpets, whose Shape and Dimensions suit exactly with those which are in use at this Day. How then has Mr. Pope suppos'd this Instrument not invented? Because *Homer's* Heroes had it not? Perhaps the *Greeks* were yet too rude to be skill'd in the Use of it; perhaps they thought it too inspiring and exciting, as we read that some of their vain Countrymen, the *Lacedemonians*, rejected it long after, as a Stirrer-up of Courage; which, it seems, they had a mind should be thought naturally too abounding in their Constitution, and therefore march'd to Battel with the soft and appealing Sounds of *Flutes* and *Pipes* among them, as if it were rather needful to correct the over-boiling of their Valour, than to provoke or excite it. *Virgil* however gives *Aeneas* a Trumpeter, and says, that he had before belong'd to *Hector*. He therefore thought the Trumpet so antient. But whatever might induce Mr. Pope to this mistaken Affirmation, his Prose is very often so spirituous and delightful, not to speak of his Verse, that his Faults, so well express'd, are like Slates in a fierce Fire, made so bright and

and red hot by the Glow they are encompass'd with, as scarce to be distinguish'd from the best of the Fuel.

17. *Then from his Bench, enrag'd, young Gideon leapt.* Now appears the Effect of the Prospects which have been describ'd. The natural Loveliness and Fertility of the Valley, with all its delightful and ravishing Adornments, when it could not be look'd upon without discovering at the same Time the threatening Camp of the Enemy, must not only enliven a Beholder's Reflection with the Plenty and Beauty, but alarm it with the Danger and Misery of his Country. The Consequence of such an Alarm in so capable a Mind as *Gideon's*, is the rowzing all those Passions, which agitate him inwardly, till they break out in a Soliloquy so contriv'd, as to insinuate to the Reader the Character of the Hero by a natural and pathetick Discovery of his Sentiments and Inclinations; whereas his Character must have languish'd, or made less forcible Impression on the Mind of a Reader, yet cool and unprepar'd, if it had been presented him unartfully in the Course of the Narration.

18. *Now were some boundless Power a general Bliss!*

Nay what does Israel want but this? The *Hebrews*, after *Joshua* was dead, finish'd only a little War of small Consequence in the South Parts of *Judah*, during the Government of *Phineas*; and then, as it were with one general Consent, gave over any further Application to that military Discipline, which had render'd them so formidable; and fell all at once upon the Improvement and Cultivation of those Lands, which had been just before allotted them; till then the Want of Property among Particulars had made every Man a Sustainer of the general Interest. This Indigence of Fortune kept the Body close compacted, like huge Heaps of Pebbles made moist by Winter-Rains, and frozen fast together: The new Warmth of Hope, which they felt on the Improvement of their Condition, dissolv'd the Adherence, and every loose Pebble became a separate Body, and contributed no longer to the Strength of the universal; so what before had been immovable by its Weight, became liable thenceforth to be scatter'd abroad by the Inroad of every Wheel, and every Horse's Hoof, that trampled casually over it. The first Step towards their Ruine was *Plenty with Ease*, which drew on Neglect of the Publick, in Respect to private Profit; the second was *Wealth with Luxury*, succeeded as a necessary Consequence by Pride of Condition, which insensibly produc'd a Disdain of Dependence, and Contempt of Authority. The natural Effect of all this together was *Dissension*, and a kind of lazy Ambition in every Tribe to set up for themselves: Such a general Relaxation of Concord, and Confusion of Interests, soon open'd a Way to the tributary Remainder of the *Canaanites* (who had been spar'd indiscreetly, not by the Mercy, but by the Avarice of the *Hebrews*) to take Encouragement from their visible Weakness, and rise against them in all Places. They succeeded in the Attempt, and a long Course of Miseries, proceeding from a Continuance and Encrease of the same Causes, for three or four hundred Years together, reduc'd from Time to Time the whole Twelve Tribes to the lowest Ebb of Fortune.

The Reason of this is plain; it import'd them little, that they had Strength enough, if united, to have withstood all their Enemies. The Feet and Arms of their Body, like those in the Fable of *Menenius Agrippa* to the *Romans*, thought it Hardship and Oppression to work for the Stomach, and ignorantly destroy'd themselves by presuming they sustain'd that noble Part, by which indeed they were supported: While they split themselves injudiciously into lean Independencies and multiplied Privileges, Exemptions, and Immunities, they were pluck'd away one by one like the Hairs of *Sertorius's* Horse-Tail, which, if pull'd at altogether, had been strong and irradicable. It is in a Body Politick the same as in a Body Natural: In the Rapidity of a Race we discover on a sudden some dangerous Pit that lies just cross our Way; what a Happiness is it in such a Case as this, that the Seat of Counsel and of Power is the same? We see the Ruine before us, and Reason and Authority, concurring in the Head, put a stop to the Mischief the very Moment 'tis discover'd, by arresting the Heels in the midst of their Precipitation. But could we suppose that our Limbs were stuck all over with Mouths and Eyes, like *Virgil's* Picture of *Fame*, and the *Argus* of the Ancients, and that every Mouth and Eye, because it look'd like a Face, would set up for a Head too; and lay Claim to the Privilege of reasoning upon, and consenting to all Decrees they should be bound by, what could we expect wou'd be the Event of this Republican Ballance? Clamour more than enough there would certainly be to give Alarm to such a Body, but the Neck of the Monster would be sure to be broke, before every Member could be ask'd its Opinion. There cannot be fancied a more significant Emblem than I remember to have met with among the Reasoners for Monarchy. They compare a Common-wealth to that Serpent which old Writers dream of, with seven Heads, and but one Tail; it is plain, say they, that this troublesome Reptile, in spite of its big Hissing, would hang fast in every Hedge; whereas had it only one Head, and seven Tails, or seven times seven, if you will, it might have slid through the Bushes without Danger or Encumbrance.

19. *How comes it he permits my Country's Shame?* The Hero of an Epic Poem must be ever well distinguish'd not only from all other Characters in the Poem, but from all other Heroes. He is to be known by some noble Peculiar in his Disposition, as by a Mark which points him out at all Times, and in all Companies, not only as a brave, wise, and glorious Man, but as that very individual, brave, wise, and glorious Man. We don't usually find ourselves satisfied with such general Descriptions of a lovely Woman, as that she is handsome, witty, gay, gentile, or good-humour'd; but we listen with more Pleasure, when, besides all these general Attributes of a Charmer, we are brought closer to her Knowledge by the agreeable Description of some one peculiar Grace, Air, Feature, or manner of engaging, by which we form her distinguishably to our Fancy, and become, as it were, acquainted with her Idea. This distinguishing Mark in the Hero of *Virgil* is *Good Nature*; in *Achilles* it is *Fierceness*; and in *Gideon* I design'd it should be *Love of his Country*.

20. *Will Israel's haughty Tribes be led by one without a Name?* It is questionless a very just Observation, which has been made by Political Writers, that Authority is Power, and that Reputation is Authority. The Nature of Things and Actions can be examin'd but by few; their Appearance reaches many. *Machiavel* discourses

discerns well, that all the Difficulty of Greatness is found in its *Beginning*; *Newer Man*, says he, attain'd *considerable Height from a very low Condition, without infinite Danger, Fatigue, and Opposition*. No Stone, tho' it grows perhaps close to the very Verge of a Hill, can rowl down of itself; it requires Force of Hand to give Beginning to its Motion; but then it is no little Rub that can be capable of stopping it, being once set a running. It is not difficult, I believe, to account for the Reason of this. That *Envy*, which is apt to be justifying itself in our Hatred and Opposition of those we call *New Men*, from a natural Vanity of comparing our own Consciousness of Worth with the Pretensions of others, becomes extinguish'd in Amazement, when we contemplate the Hazards of some terrible Reputation. The Honour of such a Man we no longer *malign*; we give it up as a Reward that was *due to his Danger*; and while every Body admires, applauds, and expects, *Opposition* becomes discourag'd, and gives way to Concurrence, till the Man, whom we resolve to *suppose* capable of *doing Wonders*, is actually *made* capable by Virtue of that Supposition. *Gideon* therefore, how equal soever he might have render'd himself to his Wishes, by annexing the Advantages of Meditation and Study to his Courage and Experience, must certainly have been sensible of those insuperable Difficulties which lay like Mountains heap'd on Mountains in the way of his Desire; and would hardly have been rash enough to have attempted so prodigious and unlikely a Glory, wanting Power, Authority, or Reputation: But God, who had purposely inspir'd him with proper Sentiments and Abilities, row'd them also into Action by the miraculous Dispatch of an Angel to commission him.

21. *But learn, reply'd the glorious Guest, from this Consent to know, Implicit Faith Men to Heaven's Mysteries owe.* *Gideon* appear'd doubtful of the Reality of a Message which was sent him from Heaven, because the Probability of its Success lay too deep for the Plummer of humane Reason to fathom. In the midst of this Debate betwixt his Foresight and his Faith; Reach me, says the Angel, yon Basket of Provision. *Gideon*, in immediate Respect to the Command, complies implicitly with it, yet he cannot forbear expressing his Wonder why an Angel should call for a mortal Meal, which he did not suppose he had any Thoughts of Eating, though he plac'd it before him. This, as I have design'd it, is only an Occasion contriv'd by the Angel, to enforce on *Gideon's* Mind the Importance of his Errand. You have, says he, set Meat before an Angel though you believ'd not that he would eat; your Motive for this was Compliance with his Command; and cannot you infer from that very Duty which has inclin'd you to this Consent, that you owe much more implicitly an Obedience to the Will of the Almighty, manifested to you by my Message? You are therefore, without examining the Likelihood of weak and worldly second Causes, to depend on Success, not as *Reason* shall promise it, but because *God* has determin'd it. I have taken the Liberty to imagine, that this was the Meaning of the Angel's Permission, that *Gideon* should bring him *Kid's Flesh and Broth*, as he does in the sacred Text; for it was not, I think, consistent with the Dignity of God's Ambassador to order Meat and Broth to be pour'd upon the Rock, without other End at all but merely to blow it up with a miraculous Flash, that he might vanish in the Fire, and leave *Gideon* in the Smoke. On the contrary, this ascending in the Flame upon delivering so significant and so authoritative an Injunction, must of Necessity have left the Hero encourag'd and determin'd to put the Promise in Trial. And such a Resolution he accordingly expresses at the End of his short Soliloquy on Departure of the Angel.

"Hence then with Apprehensions and Delays,

"Hence with all doubted Want of Humane Skill!

"That God, who made us for his Praise,

"Can mould us to his Will.

22. *Oreb, a Midian Prince of mighty Fame,*

Who led this Party on their bold Design. A Reader, who has form'd all his Knowledge of Things military upon a limited Observation of modern Practices in War, will be apt to object against this Place, that it was below the Dignity and Office of so great a Prince as *Oreb* will be found in the Sequel, to hazard his Person in the Head of a Party which was sent out to lye in Ambush for Surprize of a City. But they, who are vers'd in the Wars of the Antients, will not need to be told, that the Actions of most Repute were these Surprizals and Ambuscades. *Ulysses* and *Diomedes*, two of *Homer's* prime Heroes, go out disguis'd by Night to discover the Camp of the Enemy: *Achilles* reproaches *Agamemnon* with his Backwardness to be present in Dangers of this Nature. And, to come down at one Leap to the Opinion of some of the most successful among modern Generals (Antiquity being every where full of Examples) *Marshal Montluc*, in his Commentaries, appears in Person upon every such Attempt, and imputes all his good Fortune to that very Practice. The Duke of *Rohan* in his military Treatise maintains, that no General, who is not personally forward upon these little Occasions, can bring his Soldiers to that Vigilance and Opinion of his Valour which are necessary to his Authority. But what need we look abroad for Instances, who have so lately seen a Proof of the Validity of this Reasoning in the Example of our Earl of *Peterborough*, the astonishing Rapidity of whose Success, in the Conquest of two or three of the *Spanish* Kingdoms with an Army, which in Peace might have been mistaken for his travelling Retinue, was owing to nothing so visibly as to his own constant Presence and Personal Direction upon every Undertaking and Emergency. This glorious kind of Victory, which Men obtain by mere Energy of Spirit, and Superiority of *Genius*, is what properly deserves and adorns the Name of Conquest. A Power of bearing down one great Force by Opposition of another, claims no Title justly but that of an Overthrow, which has in some measure the Effect, but boasts none of the Causes, which distinguish a Conquest.

23. *Observ'd a tottering Cliff, which loosely hung.* I am not inclinable to misinterpret so far the Opinion of *Aristotle*, who is all for the wonderful and admirable in Poetry, as to suppose that he would persuade us to ruin the probable for the Sake of the miraculous. But if it is reasonable to believe, that *Hector* in the twelfth Book of *Homer* can take up and throw a Stone that is heavy enough to burst open the Gate of the *Grecians* Fortification before their Ships, and to throw it with such Force too, as that it breaks down the Bars, and snaps in Pieces the Iron Hinges; which thund'ring Stroke had the good Fortune to please

please *Tasso* so well, that he has made bold to borrow it, for the Honour of his *Rinaldo*, against the Temple of *Jerusalem*: If this, I say, can be reasonably believ'd, it will be no Manner of Difficulty for the Reader to allow it likely, that *Oreb* shou'd be able to push down the hanging Cliff, which is describ'd in this Place, though, being large enough to lie cross the hollow Road, and barricade the whole Passage, it is needless to confess, that its Weight must have been immoveable, but by a Team or two of Oxen. But Men who travel among the *Alps*, the Mountains of *Switzerland*, the *Pyrenees*, or even among our own *Alps* in *Scotland* and *Wales*, see nothing more common than huge Cliffs broken off from the upper Parts of the Hills, and roll'd down till they are stopp'd by some protuberant Rock, over which they hang forward so loosely and so tottering, that a very little Impulse behind them, might suffice to throw them down, though it wou'd require a Strength much more considerable, to move them after they were fallen.

24. *And thick as Hail, hurl Jav'lines down in vain.*— This Weapon was very ancient, and in Use among most Nations, though now scarce known in *Europe*, but in the *Turkish* Dominions, where they call it *Feriz*, and are surprizingly dextrous and skilful in its Exercise. The *Moors* too, all over *Africa*, retain the Use of it; and so do the *Arabians* and many Nations of the *East Indians*, where it has the Name of *Zagai*: The *Hebrew* Soldiers and great Men always carried them in their Hands, as a warlike and becoming Ornament. It was one of these which *Saul* cast at *Jonathan*, as he sat with him at Dinner. It was with one of these that *Joab* pierc'd *Absalom*, as he hung by his long Hair in the Boughs of an Oak. Out of *Asia* they were brought early into Use among the Armies of *Greece*, for we find very few kill'd in *Homer*, whether *Grecians* or *Trojans*, by any other Weapon. But, I think, Mr. *Pope* has translated it wrong, where he calls it a *Spear*, as he generally does. What satisfactory or graceful Idea can we form in our Imagination of *Hector*, brandishing two *Spears* in his Hands? By a *Spear*, we commonly understand a *Pike*, whereas the *Javelin* was only a short Dart, made handy and manageable for casting at a Distance. The *Romans* call'd it *Pilum*, and were so fond of this Weapon, that they affected to be thought the Inventors of it: It is certain they met no Enemy who us'd it; for what else can *Lucan* mean, when in describing the War between *Cæsar* and *Pompey*, he tells us, *Piles threaten'd Piles*? Had other Nations us'd them, this might easily have happen'd in any of their Wars; but since the Use of the *Pile* was thought peculiar to the *Romans*, to say, *Piles against Piles*, serv'd as well to describe a *Civil War*, as if he had said, *Roman against Roman*.

The People of *Rome* cou'd not borrow this Weapon from the *Grecians*, because we find in *Livy*, that they us'd it before they had open'd any Intercourse with them. And besides, the *Greeks* themselves had for many Ages disus'd the Practice, and been train'd to carry Pikes four and twenty Foot long, in Bodies, which were sometimes a thousand in Front, and sixteen in File; sometimes but eight deep, and the Ranks more extended, in which Order they compos'd an impenetrable, and, on plain Ground, an almost irresistible oblong Figure, call'd a *Phalanx*, where the Men, arm'd defensively with Helmets, Tassets, Corselets, Brass Boots and Targets, closing Ranks, and sustaining one another with their Pikes presented forward over one another's Shoulders, like the Quills of a *Porcupine*, it is easy to imagine what an Impression such a well-compacted Body must have been capable of making, and how firmly they supported the Charge of an Enemy; unless, where by Reason of Ditches, little Hills, or some other Inequalities of Ground, their long and firm-wedg'd Order was broke of Necessity into many Gaps or Intervals, at which, as in the Example of *Æmilius* against *Perseus*, at the Battle of *Pydna*, the *Roman* legionary Maniples, forcing Entrance, and assailing them in Flank with their broad and short Swords, gain'd frequent and considerable Advantages over this Order; but of these Things I shall speak more particularly elsewhere.

It is most probable then, that the *Romans* had their *Pilum* from their first *Trojan* Founders, who following *Æneas* into *Italy*, no doubt, carried with them the Weapons they had been accusom'd to. *Vegetius* and *Polybius* both describe this *Pilum*, but differ a little in the Form and Dimensions. As far as can be gather'd by their Accounts, and out of the *Roman Historians*, it was a round Dart of tough and weighty Wood, four Foot long, besides that Part of it that was cas'd with a triangular Steel-head, two Foot in Length, and very sharply edg'd and pointed, so that the whole Length of the Javelin was about six Foot. It was largest at the upper End, that is farthest from the Iron (though sometimes they were double-headed) the poizing Place or Grasp was commonly about an Inch and a Quarter in Diameter. The Legionary Foot always carried them and hurl'd them with strange Force and Dexterity at an Enemy, before the Bodies join'd. Their Manner of casting them was orderly and gradual; when the first Rank perceiv'd that the Enemy was within Distance, they threw their Javelins point blank, and sunk down on one Knee; then the second Rank threw behind them, and kneel'd in like Manner, to give Aim to the Third; and when all the Ranks had thus thrown successively, they rose all together, and with a dreadful Shout and Clamour drew their Swords, and fell in upon the Enemy. That the Effect of these Javelins was terrible and bloody, we have Examples enough in History; but none more worth Notice than that of *Pharsalia*; where *Cæsar*, with his usual Discernment, foreseeing, that *Pompey's* Horsemen, who were chiefly *Roman Knights*, and the most spirited Blood of *Rome*, wou'd endeavour to surround, because they out-wing'd him, plac'd Slantwise within the Horn of his Rear, six Cohorts of Foot, which made about three thousand, and gave them Orders to aim all their Javelins at the Face. The Horse, as *Cæsar* judg'd, came about upon his Rear, but were receiv'd by these Cohorts, with such Show's of their Javelins, that they turn'd their Backs at once, and disordering their own Foot, lost *Pompey* the Day, and gave the World to *Cæsar*.

25. *One Piece fell upward, and one down the Streight.* The Reader had been troubled with no Note on this Verse, if I had not some Reason to apprehend, that falling upward may, by hasty Perusers, be mistaken for a Blunder: There is a visible Difference between falling up and falling upward. A *Spear*, for example, is stuck upon its Point in the Middle of a Stair-case, and falls from its Station upward, not up Stairs, but against them. So here, the slaty Cliff splitting, as it hangs cross a steep hollow Way, one Part falls upward against the Hill, and the other down the Streight. I thought it necessary to explain it, because I cou'd find no Word that so well express'd my Meaning, and I wou'd not have it misunderstood, as it easily enough might be, upon a cursory Reading: Perhaps the Pains I have here taken may, to some,

appear grounded on too trivial a Regard to the Censure of slight Readers: The Objection wou'd be just if it related only to this particular Instance: But it is so common a Thing for a Person, whose Apprehension is darker than Midnight, to take up a Poem, and shew the Levity of his Taste and Solidity of his Ignorance, by turning to a Jest some of the most excellent Thoughts, because he mistakes them for Absurdities, as the loveliest Complexion appears ugliest in the Eye of a *Blackamoor*, that they who have taken Notice of this Presumption in heavy Readers, will allow it a common Cause of Complaint among Poets, that their Writings must be submitted, not to *Judgment* only, but to *Arrogance*. I was looking among Books which were to be sold the other Day, and found some Verses in a Miscellany, which being written in Praise of one of our Modern Poets, had among them the Lines following:

" He, fir'd with Fancy, was with Freedom full,

" Nor labour'd long to be correctly dull.

The Guilt of Ill-Fortune had misguided this Book into the prophane Hands of a Wretch who was contemptibly vain, and ignorant enough to suppose this a Contradiction; and resolving not to lose the Applause of so important a Discovery, lays hold of his Pen, and in the Heat of his Criticism, underwrites this wise Remark,

" I'll be his Slave, who shows me such a *Bull*,

" As to be found at once correct and dull.

If this Way of Judging were to be as common as it is ridiculous, the Poets, by my Consent, shou'd leave their *Art* to the *Bell-Men*.

26. *Gideon, who found it prudent to retreat.*— There is no Chance in Life which so suddenly and so often destroys the Interest of Men, as their Want of Discernment, where they ought to stop short on the smooth Ground of Fortune. They see nothing in the Heat of their Race, but *Bowling Way* before them, and never look behind till their Rear is fallen in upon. The Benefit of Prudence is, that her Eye sees all round Her, and provides against Dangers before she is surpriz'd by them. *Gideon*, who had so lately gain'd an Influence by the Valour he had shown in the Contest with *Oreb*, was now to make Advantage of the favourable Opportunity: Being foremost in the Pursuit, his Example was follow'd earnestly by the Crowd, without Regard to the Consequence. Had he rashly drawn them down from the Advantage of their Mountain, he might certainly have made terrible Slaughter of the Enemy; but how shou'd so disorderly and ill govern'd a Body have resisted on plain Ground, the Re-inforcements coming up, to relieve their flying Party? Here *Gideon* looks forward, and debates within himself, whether his overtaking and destroying the Enemy cou'd add so much to his Honour gain'd already, as wou'd serve for a Balance against the Hazard he must run, of being intercepted and cut off from a Retreat to the Mountain. In which Case too the Destruction of his Followers wou'd be laid to his Charge, and erase all the Merit which his new Hope was founded on, in the Favour of the People. He determines against the Hazard, and prudently retreats to preserve those in Safety, on whose attain'd good Opinion he propos'd to begin the Advancement of his Glory.

27. *Th' assembled Elders o'er the City Gate.*— The frequent Devastations and Miseries which have been brought upon the *Jews*, first by the Princes of the East, then by the *Roman* Emperors, and in latter Times, by the Resentment and Revenge of many Christian States, have so totally destroy'd their ancient Learning and Records, that saving the Divine Light we are led by in the *Old Testament*, there can be nothing more obscure than the Antiquities of this People. Their *Priests*, who were the Treasurers of all that related to their Laws or their Government, have been cut off almost to a Man, in the Butchery of general and commission'd Massacres, and the Few who remain'd, being overburthen'd with the Number of Scholars, whom they were necessitated to instruct a-piece, for Recovery of what had else been lost totally; the Temptations and Opportunities which this produc'd, gave Occasion to the manifest and contradictory Forgeries of their *Rabbins* and *Talmudists*. Nor have the Christian Commentators, to say Truth, in their tedious learned Tracts, clear'd more from the Confusion than they have added to the Perplexity. *Josephus*, who liv'd in the Time of *Christ's Apostles*, is one of the best Guides in our Searches of this Nature; but besides, that he is not always so full as cou'd be wish'd, his Countrymen had undergone so many Changes before his Time, that ten Tribes of the Twelve were entirely rooted out, and the Government and Customs of the remaining *Two*, so apparently different in many considerable Cases, from the Institutions of *Moses*, that for Matters of higher Antiquity, we cannot safely rely on his Authority. This, however, may be gather'd as well from his Testimony, as from the Model of the *Hebrew* State, as we find it in the Bible, That every City was govern'd by a Senate, consisting of certain *Elders*, that is to say, Men of Age, Reputation and Experience among the Inhabitants. These were usually *Seven*, with a *Levite* on each Hand, for Exposition of their Law in Matters of Doubt or Difficulty, and perhaps to record Proceedings: They sat in the Form describ'd in the Verses: The Place of their Assembly was over the Gates of their Cities; which I take to have been design'd as an emblematical Hint, that the Entrances of their Habitations were to be guarded by *Justice*, and nothing practis'd *within*, but what was lawful and moral. These Senates of their Cities judg'd all Matters of Power and Contest within their several Districts; but were under the Check of an Appeal to the capital City of each respective Tribe; there the Cause might be heard again before the Prince of that Tribe; who had also the Appointment of all his City-Senates. From these Princes again, lay Appeals to the *Sanhedrim*, their national Assembly or Counsel of Seventy, and finally from them to their hereditary Sovereign, as I shall plainly make appear in the Progress of these Reflections.

28. *A Mind so spacious, and so clear a Skill,*

Is sure design'd by Heaven for wide Control.— The Accident which so lately gave Occasion to *Gideon*, by his Combat with *Oreb*, and returning with so considerable a Prisoner, to open to his Countrymen, as it were, a *Dawn* of his Virtues, is what I have made Use of, as that *Point of Sight*, which Men commonly

monly become plac'd in by *Fortune*; but where, if they have Parts and Discernment to make Use of the Occasion, they shine out to such Advantage, that their future Way is easy. Every Thing is dazzled by the Force of their Splendor. Like Men who hold Dark-Lanterns before them, they present so strong and undistinguishable a Glare to our Eyes, that discerning Things clearly themselves, they direct their Steps safely by Aid of that Lustre which blinds those who look toward them.

It is not so much the *Merit* of what *Gideon* has said, which is suppos'd to transport into Admiration, the Senate and Auditors. A Man to whom such Sentiments were natural, must, doubtless, have express'd them a great many Times before, when they had not produc'd such Effect in his Favour. But the Case is now different; it is not to *Gideon*, the Son of *Joash*, their fellow Citizen and Acquaintance, they have all this while been listening. It is to *Gideon*, made illustrious by the Applause of the People: What had been *Common* in the *Man*, is become *prodigious* in the *Conqueror*. The Lustre of his Glory casts a Splendor round his Person, and the Words which before had been heard with Neglect, are now weigh'd with Advantage.

The Frailty of humane Nature interposes like a Cloud, between *Virtue* and *Opinion*. Success emits a Glory that dissipates this Fog, and then the *Surprize* as much deceives in the opposite Extream. Where nothing is expected but uncomfortable Darkness, there the Light of a Glow-worm will be welcom'd by our Hope, as if it were the *Blaze* of a Fire-Ball. In our natural Averseness to a Search after Excellence in others, we are, methinks, in the Condition of that Servant of *Elisha*, who was able enough to see the worst Part of the Prospect, the *Syrian* Enemy encompassing the City; but wou'd never have believ'd, if the Prophet had not remov'd the Cloud from his Eyes, that the Mountains all about him were cover'd with Chariots and Horses of Fire.

Every Thing we have heard of, every Thing we admire that is great and astonishing, will be found upon Reflection to have ow'd its Establishment to nothing so visibly as to Chance and Opportunity. Had not the Death of *Lucretia* succeeded her Rape, or some equivalent Accident fallen out, to blow up and expand the People's latent Desire of Vengeance against the Tyranny of the *Tarquins*, whom they hated before, and waited only fit Occasion to break out into Fury: Had not some such favourable Occasion been presented, the unexampled Diffimulation and Fierceness of *Brutus* had little avail'd him; and those ill Qualities of his, which a lucky Concurrence of Causes have occasion'd to be mistaken by Posterity, for his *Virtues*, had wanted Opportunity and Latitude to operate. By which Means this pretended Deliverer, to whom the Rage of a People much provok'd, gave the Means of exerting himself, if he had been born in a Time when no such Chance had risen, must probably have gone down to his Grave in that Obscurity and Contempt, in which the general Opinion of his Folly had, till this stormy Accident, buried all his Abilities.

The same wicked Qualities produc'd the same Effect in a Revolution, and under Pretences of much the same Nature, to the transient Establishment of our English *Brutus*, *Cromwel*. The Rebels, under shadow of fighting for Liberty, having warr'd upon their Sovereign, and broke in Pieces the Constitution, cou'd only be safe in what they had done already by undertaking so much more, that the unwary Instruments which had hitherto work'd for them, wou'd be no longer for their Purpose. Being reduc'd to a Dilemma of perishing themselves, or destroying the very Scheme, they had hitherto proceeded on, this desperate Necessity lent a Hand to lift *Oliver* from the Cant and Diffimulation, which were the humblest of his Talents, to a more conspicuous Stage of Action; where, on Mountains of Mischiefs, which were so rough and so dangerous, that the whole World look'd up to him with Amazement and Horror, he found himself suddenly in a Capacity to manage *all*, because *none* cou'd climb high enough to prevent him in his Reach, whose cooler Heads became giddy with the Fear of Precipitation. Thus *he*, whose best Schemes wou'd have represented him but as a Madman in an Age of less Violence, became Master of three Kingdoms, by knowing *when to dare*: And judging rightly for his Interest, that the Minds of Mankind receive different Impressions from the very same Action, at different Times, just as Chance and Occasion prepare the Passions for its Influence.

And not to leave the Reader without one good Example to make Amends for two bad Ones; the very same Senate, and the very same People, who under Influence of *Pompey*, gave Consent to the Injustice which had been offered to *Cesar*, and who, like Men, lazily indifferent, had suppos'd him, in his Absence, of no Manner of Consequence, chang'd their Minds in a Moment, and had no Ear, but for his Merits, his Valour and his Fortune, as soon as the Boldness and Penetration of his Judgment had brought him unexpectedly into the Middle of *Rome*. For immediately, upon the terrible Success of that Step, the Admiration of his Courage which durst attempt such a Danger, aw'd the Sense of the City into general Astonishment; and this giving Force to the minutest of his Measures, made his future Way easy, and his Arms irresistible.

29. *Wandering, at last he reach'd the Grove of Baal.*— *Baal* was the Sun, and *Ashtaroth* the Moon; at least they were most generally so reputed. But concerning these *Idols*, and the various Opinions of Authors about the Forms of their Images and different Modes of their Worship, much more might be said than cou'd be either useful or agreeable to the Reader. It may suffice in this Place to observe, that these *Idols* were generally plac'd upon Hills, with Groves about them: They were worshipp'd in open Air, because the Heathens suppos'd that it wou'd have been presumptuous to confine *Gods* to Houses or Temples, whose Progress was so restless, and whose Circuit so extensive; and therefore, when the *Hebrews* fell off, as they did very frequently, to the Idolatry of their Neighbours, we read, that *they made them Images and planted Groves about them; and set up an Idol upon every high Hill, and under every green Tree, after the Abominations of the Kingdoms which were round about them.*

This Description of the *Grove of Baal* and of the Image it self, I have made as full and circumstantial as I cou'd; First, as it was a Matter of Importance in the Story, there having really been such a Grove and Idol at *Ophra*, and most of the Inhabitants, and even *Gideon's* Father himself, appearing to have been Worshippers of it; and, secondly, to give the Reader an Idea of the Figure of these Images, and the Manner of placing them; as also the Form of their Groves, and of the Hills they were planted on; many of which were artificial, and are still remaining in *Palestine*.

30. *I cannot better my first Blow begin.*— *Gideon* is here inspir'd with a Zeal that is not only warm but prophetic. He says right, that he cannot begin better than by cutting down *Baal's* Grove, for, as I gather from the *Text*, though obscurely express'd, the Consequences which attended this bold Action of his, notwithstanding that they involv'd him in sudden and very terrible Dangers, were the Means which his Virtue and Presence of Mind, assisted miraculously by the Influence of Heaven, made Use of for Establishment of that Authority which enabled him to assemble a military Strength for opposing the common Enemy. The Steps and Degrees of all this I have endeavour'd to represent, as full of Terror and Admiration as the Subject requir'd; and if in the Books immediately following it has not been done, I cannot help confessing that it must be the Fault of the Author, the Incidents being such as were capable in their own Nature of the noblest Embellishments.

31. *Up rush the summon'd Ten, with glad Consent,*

Nor weigh, nor question his Intent:

Enough for them, that 'tis by Gideon meant:— From the Use which the Reader may observe *Gideon* making in this Place, of those ten Slaves whom he had taken in the Cave, and whose Lives he beg'd of the Senate, I will draw an Occasion to say something concerning *Episodes* in General, which being the Limbs of a Poem, shou'd be graceful and necessary, as well as many and various. To contrive a Course of Incidents unexpected and surprizing, requires only the Aid of *Fancy*; but to chuse which of these are useful and fit, is the Task of the *Judgment*. The famous *Sheep* with a *Top-knot*, or the *Hungarian Girl* with a Sister growing to her back, were Objects surprizing enough, and drew Spectators to admire them; but then they were such Monsters in *Nature*, as the Poems of *Spencer* and *Ariosto* were in *Art*. What Course pursued those Sailors in the Whirlwinds of *Fancy*? A thousand wild Romantic incoherent Adventures are wedg'd into their Works, without Easiness or Dependence. They were all loose and divided in their Natures, though ram'd as it were together by the Impulse of the Poet's Spirit: Methinks, when I am reading one of these Poems, I look down upon a *Sea*, where the rolling Succession of Surges upon Surges foaming on from all Quarters, while the Eye has no Bound, moves more *Horror* than *Delight*; 'tis astonishing in the *Whole*, but nothing fixes us in *particular*. A regular *Epic* Poet shou'd lead along the Mind as a River does the *Sight*; though the Current must be strong, and the Course vast and winding, yet the Flow shou'd be regular, and confin'd within Banks; it shou'd, if it were possible, at every Mile's End, receive and carry with it, *Episodical Brooks*; some of which shou'd be *slow, sad, smooth* and *deep*; others *rapid* and *murmuring*, but all glide in lovely and glittering *Meanders*, through the Country on both Sides, till they are lost in one Chancel, which being swell'd by their Assistance, conveys them to the *Ocean*.

If therefore this *Episode*, which contains a Relation of discovering ten fugitive Slaves in a Cave, had been introduc'd to no End, but to give Occasion to *Gideon* for displaying his Generosity, the Contrivance had not only been flat and unworthy an *Epic* Poem, but it had also been devious and no regular *Episode*; for while it cou'd not have been discern'd, that this Story of the Slaves had any Influence towards the Progress or Explanation of the main Action, the Reader wou'd have thought nothing in their History considerable enough to atone for the Digression they had led him into. But the whole Interest of these Men becomes entitled to our Concern, when we observe, that their Gratitude is call'd upon by their Master to assist him in an Action of Importance to the main Design of the Poem; and of so much Importance too, by Reason of its Danger, that no Men less oblig'd cou'd have been induced to partake in it: It is therefore highly probable that these ten Servants of *Gideon*, who (as we are told in the sacred Text) assisted him by Night, for Fear of the Townsmen of *Ophra*, and the Rest of their own Family, were Persons whom he had previously secur'd in his Interest, by some unusual Obligation. It was impossible not to have foreseen the dangerous Uproar and Resentment which attended this bold Act of theirs, and it cou'd not have been a common Excitement which engag'd Men of their low Condition in so visible a Hazard.

So also in that other *Episode*, which is annex'd, as it were, to the Discovery and Apprehension of these Slaves; the Misfortune of *Oreb's* Party with his becoming a Prisoner, is not merely invented to lend Occasion to *Gideon*, for giving Proof of his Valour, but from the Effect of that Valour to possess him of the Senate's and People's Admiration; nor is this yet the *only*, or even the *Chief* Design of the *Episode*: The Reader will discern it in the following Books, producing natural, unstrain'd, and necessary Consequences, which bring on one another, and contribute many surprizing and terrible Incidents toward the main Design or *Action*; and this is what every Event in a Poem of this Kind shou'd distinguishably contribute to.

32. *He fill'd it high, and on the hissing Flame,*

Pour'd the warm Blood.— It will not be necessary to inform any Reader, who has been curious in the Ceremonies and religious Rites of the *Hebrews*, that I have abridg'd in this Place the *Form* of their Sacrifice: But besides that all the little Particularities of those Duties, whether relating to Burnt-Offerings, Peace-Offerings, Sin-Offerings, or the like, may be seen at large in the Writings of *Moses*, which lie open in our Bibles, I am of Opinion, that *Gideon*, who was so particularly commanded by the Divine Will, to make this Sacrifice, as to be directed, which of all his Father's Oxen he shou'd take for that Purpose; had so good Reason to be assur'd of its Acceptance with God, that he staid not to be minutely observant of the Ceremonies. There is something too in particular Descriptions about cutting up Beasts, washing Bowels, broiling Fat, and the like, which is apt to nauseate the Imagination. I don't know how

how other Readers may relish the Frequency of this Practice in *Homer*; for my Part, I cannot help thinking, that my Lord *Roscommon* was never more in the Right, than he is in the following Observation:

“ These *foul* Descriptions are offensive *still*,
 “ Either for being *Like*, or being *Ill*:
 “ For who, without a *Qualm*, has ever look’d
 “ On Holy *Garbage*, though by *Homer* cook’d.

33. From the tough *Trunk’s* big *Bulk*, the bounding *Blows* recoil.— After what is before noted concerning assimilating the Sound of a Verse to the Image of its Meaning, I need not apprehend that this Line will be suppos’d guilty of more Roughness than it can justify. But since the design’d Rebound of the Words is chiefly occasion’d by the successive Monosyllables, in the first half of the Verse, I may take this as an Opportunity for observing, that composing whole Verses of Monosyllable Words, may be so far from a Fault, that it is unavoidable in our Language; and if done with Judgment, will be a Beauty and Advantage. The very Line which Mr. *Pope*, in his little Tract concerning *Criticism*, has made Use of, to expose it, may serve as one good Argument in Defence of the Practice.

And ten low Words oft creep in one dull Line.

If it had not been for our Abundance and Choice of Monosyllables, what wou’d Mr. *Pope* have done to have imitated so beautifully the very Fault he was describing? This then is a Proof that Occasions may happen, where slow creeping Words are a Benefit and Ornament; but if Mr. *Pope* or Mr. *Dennis*, who somewhere, as I remember, has censur’d the Censurer, and accus’d Mr. *Pope* himself for writing Verses in this Manner; if either of these Gentlemen wou’d be understood to condemn such Verses in general, I must dissent from their Opinion. ’Tis not a long Succession of Monosyllable Words, which makes a Verse harsh, jarring, or rough to the Ear, Syllables, when they are Words, may by a judicious Intermixture of Vowels and Consonants, succeed one another as smoothly as Syllables which are but *Parts of Words*. The design’d Roughness of Mr. *Pope’s* Verse above, arises visibly from the Reluctance of the Words, which are all strongly accented, against flowing into each other. I cou’d produce a thousand Monosyllable Lines from Mr. *Dryden’s* best Poems, than which nothing can be capable of more exquisite Smoothness; and I don’t see why these two Verses, which I take from the fourth Section of the foregoing Book, are the rougher for being wholly compos’d of Words with one Syllable.

U _ U _ U _ U _ U _ U _
A Tide of Death o’er all the Land they flow,

U _ U _ U _ U _ U _ U _ U _
The Paths they take they mark with Blood, and march in Clouds of Woe.

I have mark’d all the Accents, to demonstrate the Reason why Verses compos’d of Monosyllable Words will never be rough, when due Care is taken that the Syllables are successively *short* and *long*, as in the Example above. Whereas, in Mr. *Pope’s* Verse, the Words are so selected by Design, as that almost every Syllable requires a very strong and *emphatical* Pronunciation: In which Case there can be no Musick in the Line, for the very same Reason which distinguishes betwixt the *Tolling* out one Bell and the *Ring*ing a whole Belfry.

I have omitted one Note which ought, I think, to have been plac’d in the Beginning, but it may do as well here: The Reader will observe, that I always make Use of the Appellative [*Hebrews*], when I speak of the *Israelites*. This Word *Israelite* is no more fit for Poetry, than *Children of Israel*: To have call’d them the *Jews* had been a visible Absurdity, since that was a Name which they were never distinguish’d by, till after their Reduction to the single Kingdom of *Judah*: The other ten Tribes having always retain’d their Name of *Israel*. The only general Appellative they were known by among Nations, was that of *Hebrews*, which was deriv’d to them from *Heber*, the Sixth in Ascent among the Ancestors of *Abraham*, and second from *Arphaxad* the Grandson of *Noah*.

how other Readers may tell the frequency of this Practice in Homer; for my Part, I cannot help thinking that my Lord Apsalmon was never more in the Right, than he is in the following Observation:

"On Holy Cantata, though by Homer made;
"For who, without a Quota, has ever look'd
"Further for being like, or being ill;
"These few Descriptions are offensive still."

From the rough Turn of the Verse, the bounding Rhyme, the sounding Image of a Verse to the Image of its Meaning, I need not apprehend that this Line will be supposed guilty of more Roughness than it can justify. But since the desired Rhyme of the Words is chiefly occasion'd by the successive Monosyllables, in the last half of the Verse, I may take this as an Opportunity for observing, that composing whole Verses of Monosyllable Words, may be so far from a Fault, that it is unavoidable in our Language; and if done with Judgment, will be a Beauty and Advantage. The very Line which Mr. Pope, in his little Treatise concerning Criticism, has made Use of to expose it, may serve as one good Argument in Defence of the Practice.

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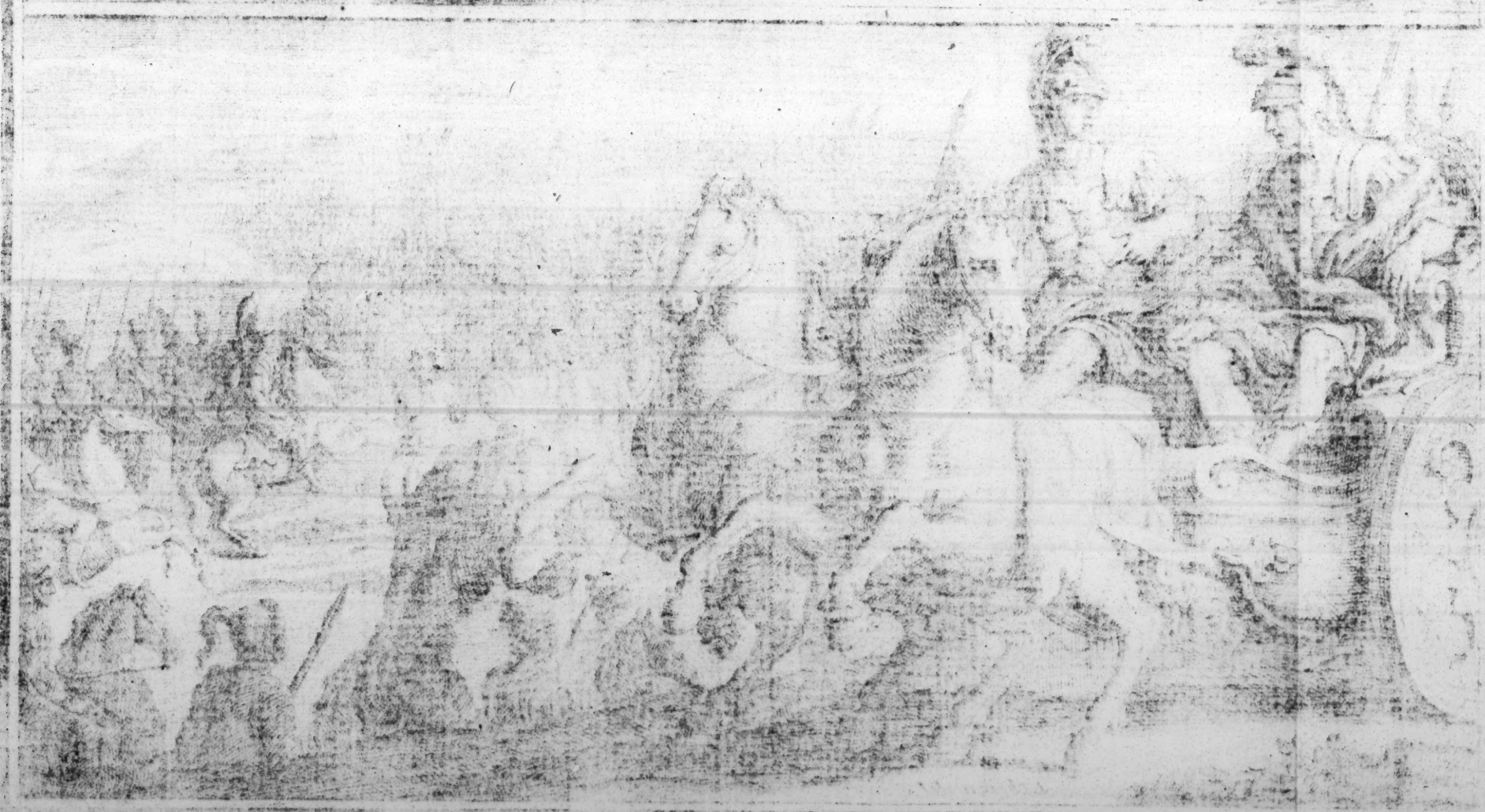
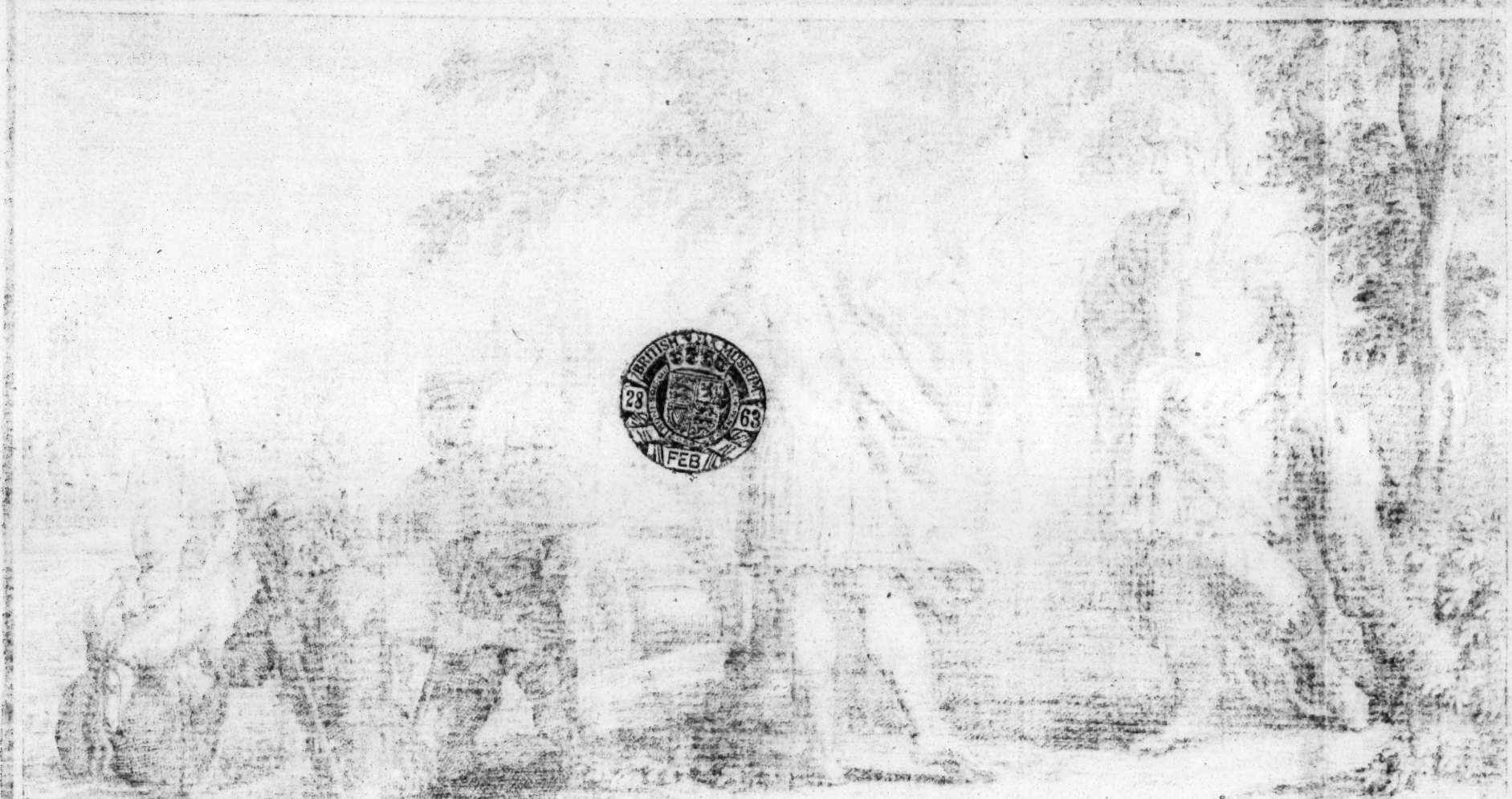
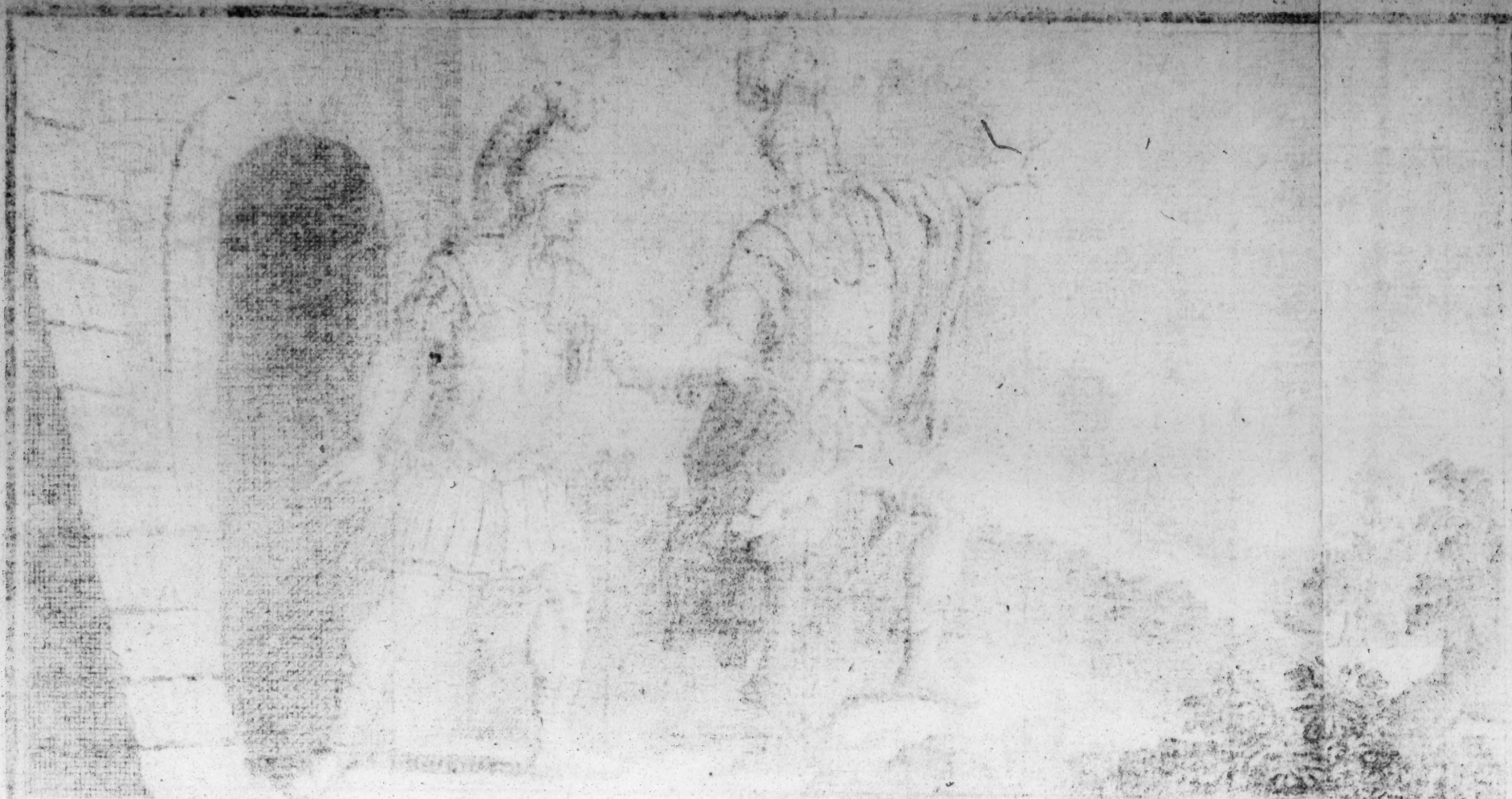
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A Tide of Death o'er all the Land they flow.

The Paths they take they mark with Blood, and march in Clouds of War.

I have mark'd all the Accents to demonstrate Reason why Verses composed of Monosyllable Words will never be rough, when due Care is taken. Syllables are successively short and long, as in the Example above. Whereas, in Mr. Pope's Verse, the Syllables are so selected by Design, as that almost every Syllable requires a very strong and unobscured Accent: in which Case there can be no Melody in the Line, for the very same Reason which distinguishes the Jarring out of the Bell and the Ringing a whole Bell.

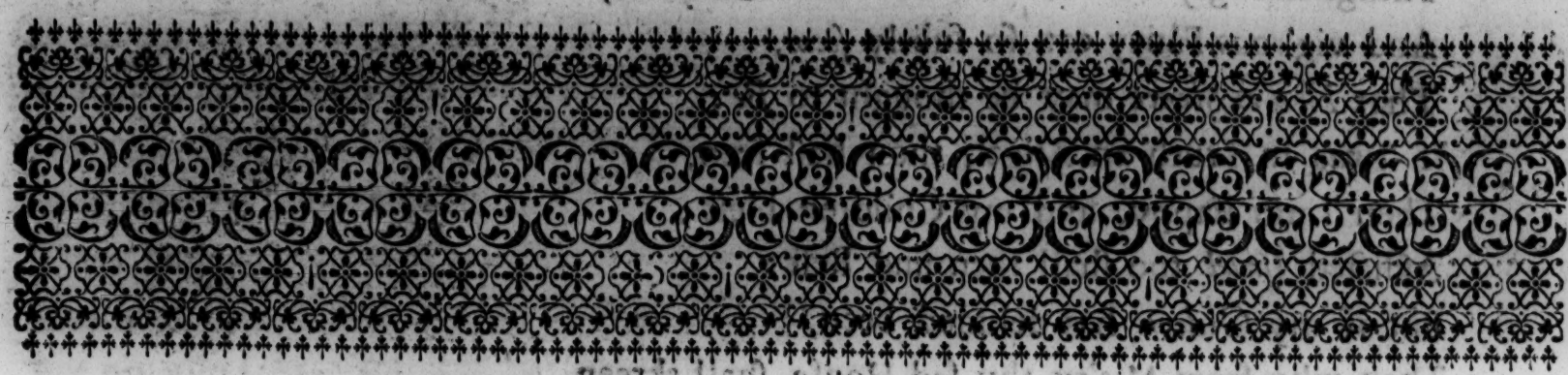
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L. Chavon del.

E. Kirkall scul.



GIDEON;

OR, THE

Restoration of ISRAEL.

BOOK II.



WAS Morning now, and the triumphant Sun
Rose lovely, with unusual Lustre bright;
For, pleas'd to find the long-wish'd Task begun,
The glowing Planet sparkled with Delight.
But *Gideon*, well reflecting what was done,
Restless, had mus'd away the tedious Night,
And in a Garden's silent Walks look'd longing for the Light:
There *Joash*, ever first to leave his Bed,
Found and bless'd his pensive Son;
And, mov'd by Turns with Wonder, Hope and Dread,
Heard all distinctly, from the Angels Hail,
To the bold Vengeance of the Night, the Grove-demolish'd *Baal*:
Gideon, says he, Prop of my failing Years!
If what thy Father's doubtful Love shall speak,
Shou'd seem too coldly weigh'd, too kindly weak;
Think, in Excuse of all that harsh appears,
Youth is too full of Hopes, and Age of Fears:
The good old Man stopp'd there to wipe away some Tears.
'Tis great, continued he, this Thirst of Fame!
Bright, tho' dang'rous, is the Flame,
That warms Thy manly Breast with this extensive Aim:

But art thou not deceiv'd by some fair Dream?
 Things strongly wish'd, Men oft believe they see,
 And vig'rous Fancy can so subtly seem,
 That *Non-existence* may be thought to Be:
 If 'twas in Truth an Angel, thou hast seen,
 Then I am happy, and my Children blest;
 Afflicted *Israel* too shall then find Rest:
 But if my *Gideon* has deluded been,
 Then who from Mis'ry thy sad House shall skreen,
 And save thy harmless Infants from the Sword?
 Thy Soul-distracting Grief, alas! will no Relief afford:
 Thy Punishment will then include thy murder'd Kindred's Fate,
 And thy too bold and honest Heart be undeceiv'd too late.

Rev'rend and wise, reply'd the Heav'n-commission'd Chief,
 Your Doubt of Me, by just Experience mov'd,
 Admits obscure and slowly, the Belief,
 That I am Heav'n-approv'd.
 Yet sure my cautious Father will confess,
 Weak though I am, my God can strongly bless:
 Nor fear, unlikely as it is, the glorious Hope to own,
 2 Occasion, oft, has hidden Virtues shown,
 Where Kindred's too close Sight distinguish'd none.
 Bent on a great Design, this Day I go,
 Fearless, to yon gay Camp on *Jezreel's* Plain;
 Happy, if I cou'd thence remove the Foe,
 Their Neighbourhood does my warm Wish restrain:
 As yet, in Arms 'twere dang'rous to appear:
 3 Th' undaring Herd, too sensible of Fear,
 Will, slow, make Head, their Enemy so near:
 You, venerable Sire! mean while prepare
 Th' assembled Elders with the welcome Tale:
 Tell them, *God's* Promise ne'er was known to fail:
 4 The Fall of *Baal*, with its great Cause declare,
 And charm them with the glorious News of Heav'n's recover'd Care:
 With that he bow'd, and turning swift away,
 Left the sad Father, e'er he Answer made:
Joash had yet a thousand Things to say;
 And sigh'd, half-hoping; then, again afraid,
 To Heav'n extends his aged Arms, and begs the doubted Aid.

From the North Range of *Ophra's* high-built Wall,
 Rose a round Tow'r of white and massy Stone,
 On Top whereof stood Watchmen loud to call,
 Brave and skilful Archers all:
 These, in the winding Road below,
 Cautious of the neighb'ring Foe,
 Stopt Passengers, and left the Way to none,
 Till what they were, and whence they came, was shown.

Deep in the vaulted Bottom of this Tow'r;
 Were Dungeons, proof against all outward Pow'r.
 Their iron Doors on massy Hinges hung,
 And grating through the stony Portals swung;
 Through the thick Walls, oblique, the broken Light
 From narrow Loop-holes quiver'd to the Sight.
 'Twas here the cautious State their Pris'ners kept;
 And here this Night, secur'd, Prince *Oreb* slept:
 But no vile Chain insulted his Restraint;
 Well treated by his gen'rous Guardian's Care;
 Who, from Captivity, to chase Complaint,
 Requir'd him only Want of Room to bear.

Yet with swift and furious Stride,
 Close-folded Arms, and short and sudden Starts,
 The fretful Prince, in dumb and sullen Pride,
 Revolv'd Escape, and curs'd in Rage, his People's Coward Hearts:
 Here *Gideon* finds him, and with gentle Grace
 Accosts him thus—Great Prince! Your scopeful Will
 Suffers Restraint, I know, but ill:
 Those Feet, so us'd your Enemies to chase,
 Spurn at the narrow Compass of this Place:
 But 'tis below the Mighty to complain;
 And only vulgar Spirits shrink from Pain:
 Great Minds, in want of present Ease,
 Shou'd teach their future Hopes to please.
 Such Hopes in you might find their Warrant soon;
 5 Take back your Sword, and, from this Moment free,
 Bless, if you please, your People's Sight, e'er Noon;
 But name not Ransome, I no Wealth regard:
 Nor stoop to barter Virtue for Reward;
 It will my best and noblest Triumph be,
 That *Oreb* ow'd his Liberty to Me.

The silent Prince, whom this new Chance alarms,
 Stood fix'd a-while, with an astonish'd Air;
 At last, advancing, snatch'd him to his Arms:
 O *Baal*! he cry'd, since rough in War, these *Hebrews* greatly dare,
 Yet in Prosperity thus gentle are,
 Why are we hostile to such manly Charms?
 More he had said, but *Gideon*, whose warm Mind
 At once display'd the Greatness of his Soul,
 And sought to further what he most design'd,
 Thus interrupted, e'er he spoke the Whole;
 Let untaught Nations, harsh in Will, make War a barb'rous Trade;
 To Men who fight for Freedom and for Peace,
 When their Arms prosper by th' Almighty's Aid,
 'Tis Time the Rage of Blood shou'd cease.
 And when the Glory has the Danger paid,
 We judge it base, with black Revenge, to give our *Light* a Shade.
 But lest, however near your Camp, the Way

Prove dang'rous, as the Mountain you descend;
 My self, your Safe-guard, will your Steps attend.
 Charg'd with a Message from our peaceful State,
 I wou'd to all your Chiefs in Council speak,
 And to their Reason offer Thoughts of Weight:
 6 Pledge me your Royal Faith, lest Some essay
 By Force to hold me, or returning late,
 Some ambush'd Party chance to lie in wait.

By the all-thund'ring *Baal*, the Prince reply'd,
 By *Moloch*, dreadful in eternal Pride!
 By *Ashtaroth*, and ev'ry God beside!
 All who intend thy Harm I will defy,
 Thou shalt be safe, or *Oreb* with Thee die.

He spoke; and through a Postern Gate,
 Which from the Tow'r led winding down the Hill;
Gideon descending, with experienc'd Skill,
 Steers his Companion 'twixt the mazy Rocks,
 And the deep Cleavings of the Hill unlocks:

Cool, beneath th' incumbent Shade
 Of Goat-browz'd Bushes, which in sylvan State,
 Bow'd by their own declining Weight,
 Hung dark'ning o'er the ragged Cliffs, and in the Breezes play'd.

A short unpeopled Path his Search explores,
 High over which a tumbling Torrent roars;
 Down through the craggy Lab'rinth, safely flow,
 From Rock to Rock they slide, from shade to shade,

Each lending other mutual Aid;
 Till by a dark and unfrequented Way,
 As Men from Night wake sudden into Day,
 They saw the silver Stream at Distance flow,
 And flash'd upon the op'ning Plain below.

Now to the Valley's Edge the mighty Pair,
 Descending, spy'd before a dusty Cloud,
 Which, thick'ning, circled toward them in the Air:
 And half-conceal'd within a noisy Crowd,
 Through which the Ring of brazen Wheels was heard distinct and loud:
 When to the River's verdant Brink they came;
 They found the Charioteers of *Oreb* there;
 And saw that wat'ring Horses was their Aim:

Wide dispers'd, and loose they were,
 Unfearing Danger all, and void of Care.
 7 The Prince beheld them with disdainful Shame;
 His Heart felt Anguish, and his Eyes shot Flame.
 Unwary Slaves, he cry'd, is this the Way?
 Retrieve ye thus the Honour lately lost?
 My Coward Foot, in Arms, their Prince betray:
 And You, averse to learn at Others Cost,

Your selves, a Worth like theirs display;
 And long to be as infamous as they.
 Why see I not your Out-guards posted here?
 What on this Quarter, thus expos'd, the neighbouring Camp defend?
 Since, for me, the Way was clear,
 What if the Foe lay ambush'd here?

Wretches, is this near Mountain held by Friends?
 His People heard him with a glad Surprise;
 Mix'd in their Breasts the varied Passions rise:
 But Joy, triumphant, quells Regard of Shame;
 A Storm of Shouts swells ceaseless to the Skies:
 Echoing, the bord'ring Hills th' Alarm proclaim,
 And the wide Valley rings with Oreb's Name.

High on an open Chariot's airy Seat,
 In State the Prince and Gideon onward ride;
 Sudden, the far divided Squadrons meet,
 And flow behind them like a following Tide.
 Pour'd from the Camp the mingled Nations roar,
 Sweeping tumultuous o'er the dusty Plain;
 Heap'd Horse and Foot in stretch'd Extent, still length'ning more and more,
 An endless Chain of Triumph swell the Train:
 But when both Swarms were met upon the Green,
 And Oreb's high-rais'd Chariot Thone between;
 Should'ring the clam'rous Concourse gather'd round,
 And clogg'd his Progress and o'er-wedg'd his Ground:
 Slow mov'd th' encumber'd Pomp, thro' deaf'ning Noise,
 And the Prince labour'd with the People's Joys.
 8 So when within some Island's Sea-wash'd Strait,
 A Bark with full-blown Canvas holds her Course,
 Two meeting Tides, driv'n by the Wind in State,
 And swell'd to Uproar by the Ocean's Weight,
 Roll bellowing on, and clashing, wild and hoarse,
 Work through each other with contending Force;
 High o'er the mingled Foam the way-stop'd Vessel rides,
 And flow, with all her bellying Sails, th' encount'ring Roar divides.

To the Camp at last they come,
 Where, waiting, the assembled Chiefs they found;
 Sincere and lively Joy did there abound,
 And false Congratulations too bow'd formal to the Ground.
 From ev'ry Side, at once, the thund'ring Drum
 Beat his hoarse Welcome, while in shriller Sound,
 The Trumpet's soft and trembling Notes flow'd undulating round.

Amidst a smooth and rising Ground,
 Full in the Center of the Camp, was pitch'd
 9 A green Pavilion of unmatch'd Extent,
 Lin'd with white Silk, with crimson Trees enrich'd,
 Whence gold and purple Fruits in Clusters bent,
 And charm'd the Eye with Groves of Ornament:

At equal Distance round this Royal Tent,
 Three several Walls of Green were strongly fix'd;
 Without all which, two hundred Paces plain
 Was set apart, unstamp'd to remain:
 For here the Kings were us'd to meet, with vulgar Crowds unmix'd.

Hither to Council, now design'd, the Monarchs bent their Way;

In his Right Hand, Prince Oreb, Gideon led:
 The graceful Hebrew march'd at ease and gay,
 And from his Eyes a radiant Sweetness shed,
 10 Circled by Kings, and taller by the Head:
 His native Majesty eclips'd their Pride:
 A Leopard's Skin, the Paws together ty'd,
 Dreadfully gay, was o'er his Shoulders spread,
 And to the Right slop'd careless from his Side;

A rich wide-skirted purple Vest
 O'er-wrap'd with conscious Glow his manly Breast;
 Girt with a crimson silver-studded Belt,
 In which his fated Sword at Freedom hung,
 Slow striding, his strong Arm he gently swung,
 His Spear at every stately Step, majestic seem'd to nod,
 And swagg'd with threat'ning Grandeur as he trod:
 Down o'er his fair and bloom-enliven'd Face,
 A jet-black Plume wav'd flow with shadowy Grace.

Now round the enter'd Umbrage marching flow,
 The Royal Brotherhood their Places fill;
 Their circling Guards edge thick the Plain below,
 11 O'er their close Heads the streaming Ensigns flow:
 And from th' important Tent toward off Ill,

Their shining Spears in steely Groves, rise bristling round the Hill.

From the Tent-door, a Chief his Jav'lin took,
 And thrice distinctly founded on his Shield;
 The watchful Guards the well-known Signal took,
 And rung it downward thro' the War-dress'd Field;
 12 Silenc'd, the distant Soldiers sit, and wait
 Th' Event of all their Sov'reign's joint Debate;

Gradual, the floating Roar of War subsides,
 And sinking Clamour draws back all her Tides:
 Soft, the sweet Trumpet's Echoes die away,
 And the yet-murm'ring Drum unwilling sleeps;
 Through the still Air thin-bodied Whispers play;

And voiceless o'er the Awe-hush'd Camp, profound Attention creeps.

Then Oreb, glowing grateful, thus began;
 Brothers in War! Kings of confederate Sway!
 Teach me to praise by Actions, if you can;
 Words are too weak to thank this godlike Man:
 If to behold me here alive to Day,

Is not a Chance unwith'd, and you would know
 To whom my future Services you owe;
 'Twill sound surprizing to your Royal Ears,
 That when o'erwhelm'd by coward Fears,
 My *Friends* abandon'd me to Infamy,
 This gen'rous *Foe*, this *Hebrew* whom you see,
 At once o'ercame, and sav'd and set me free:
 Then with a warm and artless Majesty,
 He told his People's Flight, and how alone,
 He stopp'd the *Hebrews* with the Giant Stone;
 Told how he fought, escap'd; and from the Cave,
 Pursuing others, lost himself again:

Then, how his Conqu'ror without Roughness brave,
 Ransomeless, his Freedom gave:

But shall, says he, this glorious Act, without Reward remain?
 No—Tho' it well befits a generous Mind,
 To practice Virtue ev'n for Virtue's Sake;
 They whom such stainless Obligations bind,
 Shou'd strictly weigh the Worth of all they take;
 For where the Benefit's without Allay,
 We ought with double Gratitude to pay.

He paus'd; and with a loud concurrent Praise,
 Spread on the Breast, his Hand, each Monarch lays;
 Jointly they vow to hear with due Regard:
 And bid the Hero name his own Reward:

Gideon smil'd, and bowing low,

Reply'd,—Great Kings, you nothing owe:
 Light were that Virtue, and of narrow Scope,
 Which weigh'd itself against a worldly Hope:
 When in the Soul the Seeds of Merit lie,
 Growing, the well-sap'd Branches flourish high;
 And rooting inward, outward Storms defy:
 False Worth roots shallow, and with Ease decays;
 Ev'n in the Sunshine of Hope's distant Blaze,

It withers oft beneath the Rays;
 But when Fear's strong Tempest blows,
 Ev'ry Blast the Trunk o'erthrows:

As for this little Mark of my Respect,
 Bless'd as I was, to find it in my Care,

A Prince of *Midian* to protect,
 Esteem it as an Instance of that Pride,
 With which our Tribes remember who you are:
 Nor think it vain, th' Occasion thus supply'd,

If I remind you, we are near ally'd:

13 *Midian*, the mighty Founder of your Name,
 Was ev'n as *Isaac* was, our *Abraham's* Son.

Both had to Glory equal Claim;

Both were promis'd equal Fame:

Tho' (thence our Grief) in diff'rent Paths to run;

Pro-

- Prodigious Power, and strange Effect of Time!
 Little, alas! our common Father thought,
 His Children, thus unmindful of their Race;
 Divided far, by Length of Years, by diff'rent Customs taught,
 Shou'd e'er in War each other chase,
 And strive their Kindred Glory to efface:
 But yet, thank Heav'n! it was not always so;
 When from proud *Egypt's* hard Oppression led,
 And forc'd through untry'd desert Wastes to go;
 Twas *Midian* taught us where to tread.
- 14 Ev'n to these Plains where *Midian* now encamps, our fiercest Foe,
 We were by *Midian* led.
 When hospitable *Jethro*, (sure that Name
 You mighty Princes well must know, who claim,
 At once, Succession to his Blood and Fame)
 When this good Man left Country, Pow'r and Ease,
 To guide our *Israel* by such hard Degrees,
 Ev'n to this *Canaan*, whence (so chang'd with Years)
 You strive to root us out, in Blood and Tears.
 He knew that *Midian* so with *Israel* join'd,
 Were Brothers, parted long, and new combin'd:
 Perhaps, too, his experienc'd Age had taught him well to weigh,
 That Countries, promis'd to all *Abraham's* Race,
 Wou'd not alone be soonest won
 By Deeds of War together done;
 But that so conquer'd, the so promis'd Place
 Wou'd be a Blessing for their joint Embrace:
- 15 *Israel*, he knew, assist'd so, no sep'rate Claim cou'd lay;
 Since *Midian's* Race were *Abraham's* Sons as notedly as *They*.
 Why are we Foes then? Why not still ally'd?
 Why are we warring thus in Lands we jointly might divide?
 As yet, the poorest Part of *Canaan's* Ours:
 The western Coasts defie all *Israel's* Pow'rs:
- 16 Wide from *Gaza*, Northward spread,
 Lie Countries we regard with Dread:
 Who has not heard of *Sidon's* wealthy State,
 And the proud Opulence of boastful *Tyre*?
 We, alas! on barren Rocks,
 Penurious, guard us from our angry Friends:
 They, unfearing hostile Shocks,
 (A Happiness, which Fame, not Strength defends)
 In bord'ring Plains possess unnumber'd Flocks:
 And safe, with all the Insolence of Peace,
 Count golden Plenty, and provoke Encrease.
- 17 *Oreb* with fierce and sudden Rapture fir'd,
 Starts from his Seat, and interrupts him thus:
 Shall *Hebrews* then, shall Foes by Heav'n inspir'd,
 Know better than ourselves, what's fit for us?

Witness

Witness *Moloch*, dreadful Name!

And blast my Fortune, if I once desir'd,
That he shou'd know, much less propose, this my old-favourite Aim:

But since, confed'rate Monarchs, this strange Chance

Points to a Wish, you've heard me oft advance;

I shall not scruple freely to declare

How unchang'd my Notions are:

So near in ancient Ties of Blood, why shou'd we here oppress?

Remember, 'tis our Brother we distress:

Gideon but speaks a mournful Truth, and you can own no less.

O! Let us not provoke, to sad Despair,

A Race which claims our Love and Care:

Let us, henceforth 'gainst *Israel's* Tribes Hostilities forbear,

And for a richer, juster War, on *Tyre's* proud Coasts prepare.

A few Days March will bring us to their Walls;

Open the Road; the Country full and gay,

Stor'd with Plenty all the Way.

What can we want then? Let us, hence, away;

If we surprize them, now when Fortune calls,

Their Hope forsakes them, and their City falls.

Grave from his Place rose *Zeb*, in formal State,

Heavy with Age, but Age his smallest Weight:

Fortune had giv'n him only *Bliss* to bear,

But *Nature* heap'd him with a Load of Care:

His parsimonious Soul but ill cou'd scan

The Diff'rence 'twixt a *Monarch* and a *Man*:

Courage he wanted not, but held in vain;

For his chief End in ev'ry War, was *Gain*:

18 Deep in his labour-furrow'd Look, his Av'rice stood engrav'd,

And ev'n his Silence told the Eye, He crav'd:

This *Tyrian* War, says he, has my Consent,

Rich is the *Land*, and worthy the Intent:

Since we the Kindred claim'd confess,

'Tis hard on *Israel's* Poverty to press:

E'en let them, once for all, the Tribes assels,

And gath'ring friendly what they can, buy off th' unjust Distress.

19 Pity pleads for them; we can do no less

Than let them keep in Peace their poor Remains;

Alas! their best and richest Plains

Were Ours long since; Their Mountains yield small Gains;

And lean Contention is not worth our Pains.

Sidon and *Tyre* with endless Store abound;

A thriving People, skill'd in various Arts;

A trading City and a fruitful Ground,

Populous they may be found;

But Men of great Desires and little Hearts.

Agag of Amalek late next;

A Prince of temper'd Courage, wisely cold;

No rising Passions his flow Thoughts perplex'd,

Doubtful with Reason, and with Caution bold;

A long Experience taught him to suspect;

He fear'd all Counsels, but wou'd none neglect,

Justly he weigh'd, and did with Choice reject.

Twou'd truly grieve me, (he began,)

Shou'd my Suspicion injure any Man;

Rarely he errs, who Consequences draws,

Most nat'ral to the most apparent Cause,

Treason, when deeply hid, does dang'rous lie,

But seldom hurts when obvious to the Eye.

Grant that our Strength might make us Lords of *Tyre*,

20 Let us, at least, be safe, e'er we aspire;

Short is the March, 'tis true, but we have Foes much nigh'r:

These *Hebrews*, wisely weary of us here,

Wou'd gladly see their Country clear;

And kindly show us nobler Conquests near:

But will our new-rais'd Hopes exceed their present Fear?

Old Claims of Blood, from Times so long expir'd,

Shou'd little influence where no Int'rest leads:

Had they but somewhat high'r still retir'd,

If so strongly Kindred pleads,

The Men of *Canaan*, e'en this *Tyrian* Race,

Name *Noah*, but in *Abra'm's* Place,

Were Brothers too, and Men whose Fame we ought not to disgrace:

Last Night, nor think that Dreams are always vain,

Since oft the Gods, this Way, their Wills explain:

21 Last Night, a strange, a thrice repeated Dream,

Harrow'd my aking Fancy with the Sight

Of something, far more terrible than Night.

Never did Shadows so substantial seem:

I saw you, Princes, in this Royal Tent

Assembled, as you now together meet,

And on like Business bent:

When through yon Op'ning, (Look, and mark th' Ascent)

From that Hill's Brow to *Oreb's* Feet,

Roll'd a mean rustick Cake of barley Bread;

Sudden, to monstrous Bulk it spread;

And swelling upward, vast and boundless grew,

Then moving, the Pavilion overthrew;

Dreadful, with rumbling Noise it travel'd round,

And swept the Camp before it to the Ground.

Oreb's untainted Honour well I know,

And this, perhaps——

Then *Oreb* held no more,

But rising stormy, look'd him scornful o'er:

Take heed, presumptuous Prince; nor dare, said he,
Oblique, to glance reproachful Doubts at me;
That base *Perhaps* would urge thy Dream, the Sign,
That I, unmindful of my Country's Fame

With this brave *Hebrew* Foe combine;
And help him forward with some close Design:
Nor had I wonder'd, if this Doubt thou had'st more plainly told;

Souls impotently regular, and cold,
Suspicious, ever thus behold

The gen'rous Warmth of Honour's active Blame,
And dive through Virtue for some mystick Aim;
Dishonest Mark of an infected Mind!

And can'st thou think I could my Rage conceal,
Or poorly execute what I design'd;

By Measures I must scruple to reveal?
No— Be it left to cautious Lumps, like thee,

To cloak Resentment with low Treachery:

Mine does the mean Hypocrisy despise,
And burns too furious to admit disguise:

But by revenging *Baal*— There *Zebah* rose,
A Man of Noise, and apt to interpose:

Vain-glorious, insolent, and rashly brave;
His Courage, deaf to Danger, fought his Foes,

But to his *Friends* no sure Dependance gave;
Bold to *destroy*, but ign'rant how to *save*:

Impetuous he began, and stream'd in Tongue;

Round roll'd his Eye-balls, and his Arms in tum'rous Gesture swung:

Oreb watch'd stern for what he meant to say;

And *Agag*, half-enrag'd before, now snuff'd his Warmth away.

What, must we then in civil Broils engage,

While there are tempting foreign Wars to wage?

Let us, in Times to come, divide, nor will it then be vain,

When none to conquer, but our selves remain;

But let us now march on to shining *Tyre*;

And see her brighter in her fun'ral Fire:

Proud Engroffers of the Seas!

The floating Nation sends out Ships to wander where they please,

And bring home Luxury and wanton Ease;

While we, more noble far, but less renown'd,

Meanly content within a narrow Bound,

Elbow, with faint and short-liv'd Force, the hardy Nations round;

22 Were Navies *Ours*, what could not *Midian* do?

Then might we Toils worth pushing for, pursue,

Find new Worlds, and conquer too;

And spread the Glory of our Arms, where Fame yet never flew.

Now confin'd 'twixt barren Sands,

Why was the Name of *Happy* giv'n to such ill-feated Lands?

Our crowded Hive, with Toil, sends out her Swarms:

But when the *eastern* Ocean's Depth, that now lies far behind,
 Shall waft th' excursive Vigour of our Arms,
 And o'er the *western* Seas our Ships shall Passage find;
 Then shall we reach a Pow'r that suits our Mind.
 Then shall the Nations, trembling, ask what *Midian* has design'd,
 And our wide-dreaded Name be heard in ev'ry distant Wind.

If *Agag*, cautious Monarch, loth to go,
 Foresees new Dangers in an untry'd Foe,
 Be it his safer Task to stay behind :
 23 Distinct in two strong Pow'rs, our Army led
 At once, may keep these *Hebrew* Tribes confin'd,
 High on their Mountains wholesom Tops, to whiten in the Wind;
 And against *Tyre* and *Sidon's* Sons make Head,
 Faint-hearted Slaves, in their own Purple bred,
 By Pleasure soften'd, and with Plenty fed;
 Our tawny Soldiers iron Fronts shall look the Wretches dead.

Zalmunna smil'd at *Zeba's* hope-wing'd Flight,
 And spoke, resolv'd to close the warm Debate.
 This Prince assum'd an all-superior Might,
 O'er each divided single State,
 Though by Descent and nat'ral Right,
 Lord but of one of *Midian's* Realms, beyond the other Great :
 Warlike and fierce, his daring Bosom-felt
 A Savage Pleasure in the Wastes of Woe ;
 His subtle Cruelty of Mind,
 Deep Schemes of future Tyranny design'd :
 No Warmth of Mercy his hard Heart cou'd melt ;
 All Things were just which rid him of a Foe ;
 All was beneath him in the World below,
 And *Heav'n* but bow'd to that it might bestow.
 Princes, says he, your Reasons *just* appear ;
 But you misconstrue *Agag's* Caution, Fear :
 24 Skill'd in Discernment, let him still detect,
 And point out Dangers fit for our Neglect.
 On to the West, be *Tyre's* proud State defy'd ;
Israel, oft already try'd,

Dares nothing, or must dare on *Midian's* Side :
Phœnicia's peopled Coast, by Conquest ours,
 The *Hebrews* are on ev'ry Side, encompass'd by our Powers.
 Southward and Eastward we already spread,
 And edge their Tribes with a removeless Dread :
 Northward, uncultivated Hills run on,
 From *Arnon's* Ridge to Ced'ry *Lebanon* :
 And when *Phœnicia* shortly ours shall be,
 We shall feat *Westward* too along the Sea :
 This granted, which disputeless must appear,
 Tell me how *Israel* can deserve our Fear ?
 25 Clos'd in our Net, they must be subject still,
 Or may with Ease be taken in at Will.

Hebrew ! then, when thou shalt hear,
 That our resistlefs Forces war with *Tyre* ;
 Let the twelve Tribes chuse, each, an Envoy fit
 To come before us with their joint Desire,
 And know the Terms our Mercy may admit :
 Now break we up our Council— 'Tis decreed,
 Sidon shall fall, and fall with Speed :
 26 See, with To-morrow's Dawn, that all our Host
 March hence the shortest Way to reach their Coast :
Gideon smil'd secret, with prophetick Hope,
 And all the Kings retir'd to give their diff'rent Passions Scope :
 But *Oreb*, on more gen'rous Purpose bent,
 Studious to entertain his *Hebrew* Friend,
 Led him, impatient, to his stately Tent ;
 And there in Feasts and deep Discourse, and Hours not idly spent,
 Brought the glad Day to an unwilling End.

All Night the Camp hums loud with murm'ring Swarms,
 And rings with Echo's from the hammer'd Arms ;
 Through ev'ry Quarter hurrying Concourse pours,
 And Preparation toils away the Hours :
 At last the chearful Morning's op'ning Eye
 Glows thro' the solemn Shade from high ;
 Trembling, the gloomy Vapours fly,
 Or faintly stay, grow sick, and die :
 Then the gay Sun rolls glorious up to Sight,
 And ev'ry Mountain smiles, and ev'ry Field looks bright.
 27 First the loud Drums a solemn Warning beat,
 The summon'd Soldiers hear th' Alarms,
 And strong for March, they cloth their Feet ;
 Then the shrill Trumpets found to Arms ;
 And all the swarthy Nations run, and at their Standards meet :
 First move the cumbr'ous Waggon, long in Train,
 And, dull of Motion, creak with Weight, and labour o'er the Plain.
 28 Next, loaded high, the bunchy Camels go,
 With upright Necks, stepping sedate and slow,
 Ty'd to each other, Head to Tail, a stretch'd and endless Row.
 With these, to guard them from a suddain Foe,
 Selected Bands of nimble Horsemen ride ;
 A Battle-Axe each carries at his Side,
 And in his Hand a double-pointed Spear,
 To hurl at Distance, or to wound with near :
 Long were not these sent off, when all the Host
 Receiv'd the Signal, and to move began ;
 Each in his Turn wheel'd, martial, from his Post,
 Rank behind Rank, and Man succeeding Man.
 In a rich Chariot, on a rising Ground,
 Along whose Side the Army must ascend,
 Or close beneath whose Brow their Way they found,
Oreb fate mounted with his *Hebrew* Friend ;

29 And as the Squadrons pass'd, with courteous Care,
Inform'd him whence they came, and who they were.

My Friend, said he, for from this happy Day,
We must for ever mutual wear that Name.

It joys me, that our Forces march away,
And think of Peace for *Israel's* future Claim :

Proud and imperious is *Zalmunna's* Mind !

But I will timely aid your Envoy's Pray'r,

By warm and well-distinguish'd Care,
To curb his Hate, whom Nature made *not kind*.

Mean-while, this fair Occasion take
To fit, and well observe our dreadful Host.

Brave Nations, thus ally'd, what Strength can break ?

And if, beneath our Arms, your Tribes now shake,

This at least they have to boast,

Sev'n Years your Courage has withstood us all,

While in as many Months, at most,

Before the weakest of our Pow'rs the Pride of *Tyre* shall fall :

All the wide Bosom of the spacious East

Has emptied her best Spirits on your Land :

'Tis true, by Time and War decreas'd,

Many have fall'n ; nor has my Loss been least ;

Yet you will see the Numbers, we command,

Thick as Grasshoppers on the Field, and countless as the Sand :

'Tis no small Glory you could Kings withstand ;

Who grasp'd your State with such a nervous Hand.

30 In five broad Lines our num'rous Army moves ;

For, where unbroken Plains will give us Way,

This Order ev'ry Leader best approves,

As least expos'd, when moving in Array ;

And making double Marches ev'ry Day.

31 Wide, 'twixt each, a Space we leave,

Some Furlongs Interval, unfill'd and free,

That no Impression, which we can receive,

Shall thro' more Lines than one extended be :

But all each other, jointly may relieve ;

And when Confusion spreads through one, the other may retrieve :

Mark this advancing Front with Care,

My Ensigns all these Squadrons bear :

I know not how, of late, so chang'd they were ;

They want not Skill, and have been us'd to dare.

See, how the Wings with Iron Chariots shine ;

On either Horn four hundred : Each of these

Bears two arm'd Warriours, whom three Horses draw,

Train'd to give Charge a-breast, in a broad-harness'd Line :

32 At each big End of their strong Axle-Trees,

Sharp-cutting Scyths are fix'd with edgy Slant ;

These

These we let down with Speed and Ease,
 And bend them upward, as we please:
 But, when resolv'd to rush upon the Foe,
 These Chariots on their brazen Wheels advance,
 How weak and useless are the Sword and Lance?

Horse and Man they overthrow;
 And while the Riders, from within,
 Miffive Deaths hurl dreadful round,
 The loose-main'd Coursers, with impetuous Din,
 Break thro' the Ranks, and thunder o'er the Ground:
 With rapid Motion some they trample down;
 Others, who, thronging back, evade their Force,
 The raz'ry Scyths with reeking Edges sweep,
 And reap, destructive, in their bloody Course,
 Of these eight hundred, which you passing see,
 Six hundred have no other Lord but me;

Two hundred *Moab's* Monarch owns;
 Our Lands conjoin; Confed'rate are our Thrones.

Now mark the *Foot*, in three Divisions led;
 The Midmost holds my Country's warlike Sons,
 Brave Souls! to great and long-try'd Dangers bred:

33 Crops our Dominions ridgy *Gilead* runs;
Gilead, whose Trees sweat sov'reign Balm, to heal
 The Wounds her brave Defenders chance to feel.
 Twelve thousand, these; who once, in Arms unskill'd,
 The Palm-producing Plains of *Midian* till'd;
 Or hollow'd Cedars on the Mountain's Side,
 And, in light Floats, on fishy *Arnon* ply'd:

34 Those to the Right Confed'rate *Moab* sends,
 Eight thousand Spearmen, arm'd in radiant Steel;
 Bold *Hiram* leads them; *Midian's* high-priz'd Friends;
 We know their Worth, who oft their Courage feel:
 Near fenny *Nebo*, and moist *Hesbon*, they,

Cities, greatly known to Fame!
 Dwell in deep Vales, whose rich, but stubborn Clay
 Does some Resemblance to their Natures claim,
 Valiant, but hardly model'd to obey.

Who has not heard what Giants they o'ercame?
 35 *Emims* and *Anakims*, of hideous Fame!
 Broad-striding Champions! big-bon'd Monsters all!
 Strong as an *Oak*, and as a *Cedar* tall!

Near us here, upon their Left,
 You see five thousand Foot, from *Ammon* sent;
 36 North-East from *Moab*, bord'ring *Ammon* lies;
 They also Giants of their Lands bereft:

Ev'n to this Day the Realm a Giant-Race supplies!
 In *Rabba's* Town, a Proof of strange Extent,

The Iron Bed of *Og* may yet be seen,
 In Length nine Cubits, and four Cubits wide!
 You know the Story well; his fatal Pride,
 Vast as his Bulk, your happier Arms defy'd;
 37 And by the Hand of your great Chief he dy'd.
 On their Hills healthy Top, delightfully serene,
 A Soil with Sage, and Rue, and Wormwood green;
 38 Their luckless *Balac* stood to curse your Race,
 When *Balaam* blest'd you, to his Lord's Disgrace.
 These three distinct Divisions I command;
 Our Army's *first*, and not her *weakest* Line:
 Warm Emulation flames through ev'ry Band:
 Fearless of Death, in daz'ling Pomp they shine;
 See! how thro' Clouds of Dust they march, nor Heat, nor Labour shun!
 With glowing Temples urge their Way, and sparkle in the Sun!

But look! the Army's second Line comes on;
 39 These too from *Midian*, mighty Founder! spring.
 Hard as their hilly Country's native Stone;
 They serve a rich, but an ungen'rous King.
 Mean as their Monarch's Mind, their Dress is plain,
 Zeb's homely Spirit, in his plumeless Train!
 Full fifteen thousand Foot this Prince attend;
 40 Three thousand Slingers upon Camels ride:
 These form the Center, whence his Cohorts bend,
 And rounding forward toward each End,
 With hollow Compass spreading wide,
 March like a Crescent, in whose Midst their sullen Prince they hide:
 41 Experienc'd Archers these! their Left-Hands bear
 Tough and springy Bows of Steel:
 Arms of slender Proof they wear;
 And the big Shield's safe Weight they never feel.
 Across their Shoulders, loose, with careless Air,
 Hang Quivers stor'd with Arrows, sharp and strong;
 Hark! how they sound, as they step swift along!
 From Rock-built *Selah*, a secure Defence
 For weak-soul'd Av'rice, and a Wealth immense,
 These rough unsightly Squadrons came;
 Neighbours to *Hor*, a Desert known to Fame
 For many a Chance; with one by you supply'd,
 Which needs must ev'ry *Hebrew's* Mem'ry claim;
 'Twas there your Venerable *Aaron* dy'd.
 Southward from *Moab's* Plain the Region runs,
 And borders, Eastward, upon *Edom's* Sons:
 Barren of Corn; a harsh ill-water'd Soil!
 Where Lab'ers, unrefresh'd, wou'd die with Toil,
 Did not rich Vineyards round the Mountains twine,
 And float the thirsty Land with Floods of Wine.

- But see, with haughty State and conscious Pride
 The great *Zalmunna* tow'rd us tow'ring ride
 Bounding, he leads the midmost Squadrons on,
 Too wide extended to be all discern'd:
 This Monarch has supream Dominion won;
 In the dark Mysteries of Empire learn'd.
 By native Right he rules a distant Land,
 42 *Midian's* utmost Southern Bound,
 Along the rich Red-Sea's indented Strand.
 Wide his Realms that Tract surround,
 43 Where your *Great Moses* *Jethro's* Daughters found;
 A Soil, that does with ev'ry Growth abound,
 But streak'd with tiresome Veins of fruitless Sand:
 Ten thousand Horse this mighty Sov'reign brings,
 All strong and rapid, as the Eagle's Wings.
 See! how, in Heat of Blood, they paw the Ground:
 And champ the Bit, and fidelong prance,
 And tear up Half the Plain, as they advance!
 The Foot that, bright in Armour, wing these Horse,
 Are thirty thousand, of unequal'd Force:
 Unwearied Veterans, of fearless Heart;
 All deeply practis'd in War's bloody Art;
 Us'd to all Arms, and try'd in ev'ry Part.
 These Chariots, which upon their Left roll by,
 Obscur'd by Hills of Dust, which with them flie,
 Are full six hundred, arm'd and govern'd well:
 As many more upon their Right,
 Would terrify your wond'ring Sight;
 But the long Distance tires the aking Eye.
Zalmunna's Pow'r does all the Kings excel;
 And what his Strength, and what his Aim, 'tis Time alone can tell.
 This Way now direct thy Eye,
 Where *Agag* on his Silver Chariot rides,
 Shining far, and mounted high:
 Four Milk-white Coursers, with hot panting Sides,
 Vex'd to be curb'd, and struggling with the Rein,
 Draw him, disdainful, o'er the smoaking Plain.
 44 This Prince is Lord of *Amalek's* wide State;
 His Seat is *Pharan*, and his Empire Great:
Arabia's midmost Rocky Tracts he sways,
 Peopled by one of *Ismael's* wand'ring Stems,
 45 Call'd *Hagareens* from *Hagar*, *Abram's* Maid;
 The swarthy Mother of this rugged Race:
 Northward, his Lands the Wind-mov'd Desert hem;
 46 On which in shifting Cities oft they dwell,
 Safe from the Sun, beneath their Tents cool Shade,
 And swift of Foot the Savage Wilds invade,
 To hunt the Lordly Lion from his Cell:

Three Thousand Horse this crafty Monarch guides ;
 Each a skill'd Archer, who in rapid Flight
 Turns in his Seat, and dext'rous, as he rides,
 Aims his Shaft backward with a dreadful Slight
 And, flying, kills more surely than in Fight.
 These in two dusky Cornets sweep along;
 And the Main-Body, which between you see,
 Is wedg'd with hardy Foot, rang'd deep and strong:
 Full Twenty Thousand they are said to be,
 Abstemious Highlanders ! all rough of Soul,
 Patient of Toil, but restive in Control.

Rash Zeba next brings up the gloomy Rear ;
 Impetuous as a Tempest, arm'd with Hail :
 All Passions shake him in their Turns, but Fear
 O'er his warm Hope no Danger can prevail :
 See, how in martial Majesty he treads !
 Arm'd with a Spear, and looking fiercely round,
 On Foot his twenty thousand Foot he leads,
 And measures slowly the unheeded Ground :
 Four hundred noisy Chariots wing this Band ;

And under this bold Chief's Command
 Six thousand Horsemen, loosely spread behind,
 Close the gay March, and with elated Mind
 Lift their high Standards to the following Wind :
 47 Happy Arabia's Aromatick Plains
 Stretch their sweet Bosoms, where this Monarch reigns ;
 There the rich Hills a gummy Harvest shed ;
 And Myrrh and Frankincense the Groves o'erspread :
 Ev'n from their Beasts a musky Vapour flows,
 And the Spice-breathing Wind with am'rous Softness blows,
 From their broad Heaths Wild-Thyme and Camomil
 Their coarsest Air with perfum'd Breezes fill ;
 Physick's wide Want this druggy Tract supplies ;
 Let the sick Elephant lie down to roll,
 From the crush'd Bed Balsamic Odours rise,
 And the snuff'd Scent revives his savage Soul :

As when some suddain News alarms a State,
 Of threat'ning Consequence, and full of Fear ;
 All meaner Cares and Themes, suspended wait,
 While this alone does worth Regard appear :
 But when by slow Degrees the Rumour dies,
 And Thought-recov'ring Crowds expect no more,
 Each to his proper Task his Care applies,
 And all is hush'd and languid, as before :
 So while the Prince and Gideon heard the Noise,
 And saw the swarmy Legions passing by,
 No other Sound their hurried Ear employs,
 No other Object fills their busy Eye :

But now the Army past, the Sound scarce heard,
The distant Prospect roll'd in Dust away ;
Pleas'd, they observe the Plains about them clear'd,
The chearful Birds above their Chariot play,
And Nature smiling round them stilly gay:
Then *Oreb*, rising from his Chariot's Seat,
Beck'ning, made Sign to a well-mounted Band,
Which underneath a Grove's serene Retreat,
At Distance, waited their lov'd Chief's Command.
Sudden they mov'd, and closing in behind,
The Prince, reseating, shakes the loosen'd Reins,
Fleet his Horses, as the Wind,
With sounding Hoofs fly rapid o'er the Plains.

While to the Mountain's most unbarr'd Ascent
Their Eye-directed Way they bent ;
To *Gideon* thus the gen'rous *Oreb* spoke.
Since my illustrious Friend declines to take
Such poor Returns as *Oreb's* Pow'r can make,
And prizes Virtue for her own great Sake ;
I know not how to show him my Regard
Of Actions, I, with him, confess to be above Reward :
It must be left to Time and Chance to find
Some vast Occasion for my Thanks design'd :
'Till when, your Bounties, all unpaid, must load my struggling Mind.
Mean-while, ---- and there he from his Finger drew,
A Ring, which glitter'd with a dazling Ray,
From the most radiant *Gem*, which e'er in Eastern Quarries grew,
Wear this in Mem'ry but of what I owe,
And that I mean to pay.

Gideon long press'd, at last, averse, gave way,
And smil'd with thankful Grace ; ----- when hid below,
On the Hill's Side appear'd a *Hebrew* Band ;
Which, by the late Attempt instructed well,
Under a valiant Chief's Command,
Took Place the Night before to watch what past,
And future Parties there repel :
These *Gideon* saw, and from the Chariot stept ;
Swift, after him, Prince *Oreb* leapt ;
And with a zealous Warmth his Friend embrac'd :
Then, courteous, took his Leave ; and all in Haste,
Remounting, turn'd his Horses tow'rd the Host,
And reach'd it soon, and foremost shone, conspicuous, in his Post.

The End of the Second Book.

But now the Army pass, the sound faro heard,
The distant trumpet roll'd in Daff away;
Pleas'd, they observe the Plains about them clear'd,
The cheerful Birds above their Chariot play,
And Nature smiling round them gaily gay,
Then O'er, rising from his Chariot's seat,
Reck'ning, made sign to a well-mounted Band,
Which underneath a Grove's serene Retreat,
At Distance, waited their lov'd Chief's Command.
And when they mov'd, and closing in behind,
The Prince, releasing, flung the joyful Reins,
Flew his Horse, as the Wind,
With sounding Hoofs, the rapid o'er the Plains.

While to the Mountains' most majestic Peak
Their Eye directed, why they bent;
To Glean thus the regions O'er spoke,
Since my illustrious friend deigns to take
Such poor Rewards as O'er's Town can make;
And gives Virtue for her own great sake;
I know not how to show him my regard;
Of Actions, I wish him, costs to be above reward:
It must be left to Time and Chance to find
Some vast Occasion for my Thanks design'd;
Till when, your Donator, all unpaid, shall lead my struggling Kind,
Mean-while, --- and there he from his Lager drew,
A Ring, which glister'd with a dazzling Ray,
From the most radiant Gem, which e'er in Eastern Quarries grew,
Wear this in Memory, but of what I owe,
And that I mean to pay.

Given long press'd, at last, avert, gave way,
And smil'd with thankful Grace; --- when hid below,
On the Hill's side appear'd a Hebrew Band;
Which, by the late Attempt intruded well,
Under a valiant Chief's Command,
Took place the Night before to watch what pass;
And turn'd Parties there respect:
The Gideon saw, and from the Chariot leapt;
Swift, after him, Prince O'er leapt;
And with a zealous Warmth his friend embraced;
Then, courteous, took his Leave; and all in haste,
Remounting, turn'd his Horses toward the Host,
And reach'd it soon, and foremost those, conspicuous, in his Post.

REFLECTIONS

Second BOOK.



Alexander, like a violent Deluge, had over-run all the East, at an Age in which *Cæsar*, a Genius much superior, had scarce made a Step on the Theatre of Action. His Father's Preparations pav'd the Way to his Glory, and *Aristotle* had instructed him to know and use Advantages. It is no Wonder he shot fast under so sunny an Influence. *Scipio* too, like a *Comet*, blaz'd out in his Youth, but then he hasten'd to extinguish, in Proportion to his Lustre; his last Scenes of Life, says *Livy*, yielded visibly to his Beginnings: *Hannibal*, in the Middle of his Days, the most dreadful of Mankind, in the Evening of his Life, became weak and contemptible. How terrible, how victorious, how discerning, how inflexible was our *Edward* the Third! And yet, at last, how wavering, how despis'd, how impotent and inconsiderable! Even *Salomon*, notwithstanding his Divine Aid of Wisdom, felt the Influence of Years, in a Decay of his Spirit, and among his Multitude of Women, became less than the Shadow of what the Queen of *Sheba* had found him. *Homer*, with all his Vastness of Fancy and Energy of Judgment, in the Wane of his Life, degenerated to a Dreamer; or, as *Longinus*, I think, calls him, a Teller of old Stories.

Methinks then it were reasonable to conclude, that from thirty to fifty shou'd be the Age for great Actions. Nor is that Time so short, but it may be gloriously employ'd by a Genius, in whose Temperament the Heat of *Nature* is enliven'd and kindled up by the Light of *Reflection*; and the *Shortness* of Experience illustriously supply'd by a *Length* of Understanding.

2. *Occasion oft. has hidden Virtues shown,*

Where Kindred's too close Sight distinguish'd none. It will be difficult for this Reflection to find a Reader who is not able to verify it out of his particular Experience. Nothing is more remarkable than that Difference which may be observ'd, betwixt the Opinion we conceive of our Intimates, in what regards Things common and Things extraordinary. In the ordinary Occurrences of Life, we consider our Friends with a Partiality that magnifies their Worth, and multiplies their good Qualities. In surprizing and more elevated Scenes of Action, we are apt, on the contrary, to distrust their Abilities and feel a Diffidence, which represents them as unequal to their Undertakings.

It may be doubted, Whether we ought to impute this Disposition to something of a Tendernefs, which is apt to make Dangers look bigger than they are, and diminish in Proportion the Strength oppos'd against them? or, Whether it is not rather the Effect of a secret Kind of *Envy*, which inclines us to consider, as a Disgrace to ourselves, the Acknowledgment of a superior Capacity in another, whose Advantages having been no greater than our own, we are naturally impell'd to a Disrelish of his starting before us in the Race of Glory, as a Speed which is to leave us under the Character of too slow and heavy Runners, to be able to keep Pace with him?

But certain it is, we are never so susceptible of Amazement, as upon the sudden and extraordinary breaking out of Abilities in those with whom we have been us'd to converse intimately, without any Expectations of that Nature; the Familiarity of our Correspondence, having, as it were, deaden'd our Sense of their Sufficiency, as our Flesh is insensible of the Bones it is sustain'd by. Great Virtues therefore are discern'd most strongly at a Distance; when look'd upon too near, our Apprehension either distinguishes them not at all, or but confus'dly, and in general, as our Eyes discern not clearly the Letters of a Book held so close as to touch them. Our Saviour himself was content to give Way to the Violence of this natural Impulse, regarding it as forcible enough to prevent the Operations of his divine Spirit, among those who consider'd themselves as his Countrymen and his Companions. Is not this, they cry'd, the Carpenter's Son? Is not his Father's Name *Joseph*? Are not his Brothers our common Acquaintance? How came he by this Knowledge? Whence shou'd he have Power to perform these mighty Wonders he pretends to? And the Influence of this Doubt was so general and prevalent, that we are told in the Gospel, *He did no great Works among them, because of their Unbelief.*

3. *Th' undaring Herd too sensible of Fear,*

Will slow make Head, their Enemy so near.— Whatever Hopes might have animated the future Prospects of *Gideon*, he must certainly have consider'd it as highly improbable, either that he shou'd prevail with his Countrymen to assemble for their Deliverance, or that being assembled, they wou'd be able to provide themselves of many Things indispensibly necessary to War, while the Enemy lay so near them as to over-awe all their Motions. The first Attempt therefore to be made, was the Removal of the *Midian* Army to such Distance from *Ophra*, as might give Time and Occasion to his Endeavours. To do this by Force, was impossible to a Man, who, as yet, was so far from being powerful, that he had neither Authority nor Influence. The Fox's Skin must be worn then, since the Lion's is wanting. A Vigour in the Mind can supply all Defects, where a bodily Strength is either unready or unable. This Exertion of Soul is the Mark of able Natures: It is this unconquerable Valour of the Intellects, which distinguishes a *Gideon* from a *Sampson*, and a *Cesar* from a *Hercules*. The Difference between these two Excellencies is best discern'd in their Consequences. The one holds, with Ease, the Possession of a City, a thousand of whose Inhabitants are stronger than himself; the other is oblig'd to fly out of a Town, whose Gates he has Strength enough to carry away upon his Shoulders.

It is this Consideration, which in spite of my Regard for the concurring Applause of a long Descent of Ages, provokes me to Indignation when I read in *Homer* and *Virgil*, the so much admir'd Descriptions of impenetrable Shields, and that resistless and invincible bodily Robustness, which they, who like it better than I do, may go on to call Valour. Let me listen as long as I can to the Criticks, and allow all the Justness of their allegorical Defence, that these Fictions but signify the Protection of the Gods: After all they can say, or that we are able to suppose, in Excuse of these Inventions, we shall never be able to admire the Courage of a Hero so arm'd, let him be as victorious as the Poet pleases to make him. We are apt to undervalue the Worth of his Boldness, in Proportion to the Consciousness of his Safety. Let the Gods protect from Danger as much as they think fit, and we will rather admire than condemn the Favourite they interpose for; but let him not then be disgrac'd by too palpable an Assurance before-hand, that he is to do all without suffering any Thing. These more than gigantick Strengths and impenetrable Suits of Armour, expose the Heroes to more Wounds from the Contempt of their Readers, than they are suppos'd to have defended them from in the Crowds of their Enemies. When I see an *Ajax*, a *Turnus*, a *Diomedes*, or an *Achilles*, cutting down whole Squadrons, and driving Thousands before him, I cannot, methinks, but wonder much at his improvident Prodigality, that being personally of Capacity to mow whole Troops, and make whole Armies fly, as Mr. Pope has it, he wou'd put himself to the needless Expence of so many thousand idle Fellows to walk after him: These Things, I am sure, are out of Nature, however common in Poetry; and no Veneration that can reasonably be due to the Merits of the Ancients, shou'd include their Indiscretions. Sudden Sallies of Passion, Despair, or Revenge, may be justly enough suppos'd capable now and then of something like this. But to make a constant Practice of giving all the Toil and Effects of a Battle to half a dozen Butchers of a Side, and enumerate in tedious Lists of Slaughter, the whole Succession of their

their Massacres, without Regard to Conduct or natural Probability, may, in spite of the Greatness of any Name whatever, be boldly pronounc'd unreasonable, and an Affront to the Understanding. We are told by all the Criticks upon these ancient Poems, that as *Imitation* is their *Means*, so their *End* is *Instruction*. There is nothing imitated by the Poets in these unnatural Sallies, but the Follies of one another; and as for the other Part, a Man who reads the Wars of those Poems, with Design to be instructed, may pore himself blind before he will learn to get such a Shield as *Virgil* gave *Aeneas*, or to kill whole Squadrons at a Time with his own Sword and Lance, after the Example of *Achilles*.

4. *The fall of Baal, with its great Cause, declare;*

And charm them with the glorious News of Heaven's recover'd Care. *Gideon*, before he cut down *Baal's* Grove, foresaw what a Tumult it wou'd probably be attended by. He considers therefore, that his Absence, during the first Heat of the People's Resentment, wou'd render them more capable of listening with Attention to such Reasons as might be offer'd in Defence of the Action. Men are naturally inflam'd into Violence and Rage, upon Presence of the Party, who is suppos'd to have injur'd them. Under the Influence of Passion we are obstinately deaf to all the Arguments of Reason. Let our Heat become appeas'd, and we sink insensibly to Reflection. *Joash* therefore, who was a Man of Authority in the Senate, and himself a Worshipper of *Baal*, might rationally be thought capable, in the Absence of his Son, to prevent or allay the Indignation of the Populace. He is, in order to this, to interest, first, the whole Senate in the Cause, by a solemn Declaration, that an Angel had brought *Gideon* a Commission from Heaven; together with Promise of a general Deliverance, on Condition of abandoning the Idolatry they were fallen into. And this, though perhaps he did not fully give Credit to it himself, his natural Affection wou'd incline him to comply with, at the Entreaty of his Son, and for Prevention of the Consequences which might otherwise be dangerous.

5. *Take back your Sword, and from this Moment free.*— *Oreb*, who is one of the five confederate Kings oppressing *Israel*, becoming Prisoner to *Gideon*, the Hero considers this Accident as of Force, to give Beginning to his Measures, for removing *Midian* from the Neighbourhood of *Ophra*. The Liberty, therefore, which he so generously restores him to, serves, at once, as a Mark of *Gideon's* noble Nature, and is also of Use to the great View before him, as it entitles him to a sure Interest in, and Friendship with one of the Kings, and introduces him with Honour to the Audience of all the Rest. Here then begins another Effect of this Episode, of taking *Oreb* Prisoner, which was design'd, as I have said in a former Reflection, to produce a Chain of Consequences, to the Furtherance of the main Action. The Character of *Oreb* was therefore of Necessity to be represented generous and full of Virtues. Had his Disposition been base, he had not been capable of so strong an Impression in Favour of his Deliverer; but being brave, just, and open in his Nature, not only the Obligation, but the Manner of conferring it, strikes his Mind with Admiration, and inspires all his Soul with Resolutions of Gratitude.

6. *Pledge me your Royal Faith, &c.* If *Gideon* wou'd attempt the Removal of the Enemy, by Reason and Persuasion, it was absolutely necessary that he shou'd hazard himself among them. But a Courage that dares defy Dangers, degenerates into Rashness, if it does not also foresee and provide against them. The only Caution in his Power, is this Royal Promise which he requires from *Oreb*. It had been inconsistent with the Character of *Gideon*, shou'd he have omitted the Prudence of this Precaution; since he cou'd not yet be perfectly acquainted with *Oreb's* noble Disposition. In the Text, indeed, *Gideon* goes into the Enemy's Camp without such previous Security, and on a Design very different from that which I have given him; but, besides that his Descent to their Camp, as recorded in the Scripture, was later in Time than that which this Reflection refers to, it is not only allowable, but even requisite, in Poems of this Kind, to omit what cannot be made to shine, as *Horace* says, or what is little Essential to the Purpose of the Subject. "If a Man, says Mr. Cowley, were to compose a sacred Poem, by only turning a Story of the Scripture into Rhyme, he is so far from elevating Poetry that he only abases Divinity. The same Kind of Habit is requir'd in the Divine Poem as in the Profane, only the Divine allows better Stuff, and therefore wou'd look more deform'd if ill dress'd in it."

7. *The Prince beheld them with disdainful Shame.*— *Oreb*, who had so lately been a Sufferer by the Relaxation of Discipline in one Part of his Army, has all the Reason in the World to be provok'd by this Discovery of the same Neglect in the other. And this Resentment, which at any Time had been natural and necessary, is now much more just in a Prince of his Character, because *Gideon* is in Company, and may be suppos'd to consider his Men's disorderly Appearance, with some inward Reproach to the Commander in Chief. Mount *Ophra*, which overlook'd the Camp of *Midian*, and discover'd what was doing by any Part of their Army, was maintain'd by a considerable Strength of the *Hebrews*; and it was therefore the Duty of an Enemy to have been watchful in their Guard, and regular and orderly in their Motions, because hourly in Danger of a Surprise upon the first Mistake or Omission.

But there are two Reasons, why it was naturally to be suppos'd in this Place, that *Oreb's* Soldiers shou'd be ill-order'd and negligent of their Safety. First, Their Head being absent, the Members were imperfect, confounded, unresolv'd, and rather struggling for particular Preference than the general good Order. And, secondly, their long Course of Prosperity had made the *Midian* Forces insolent and secure, and taught them to despise and under-rate all Attempts they cou'd apprehend from so dispirited an Enemy.

This impolitick Security is what all victorious Armies fall naturally into, where the Caution or Experience of a General is not watchful to prevent it. The Frequency of the Case might even justify a Maxim that wou'd sound like a Paradox; That an Army newly beaten is in a fair Way to Conquest, and they who are victorious in most Danger of Destruction.

It requires, indeed, a keen-discerning Genius, and a daring Resolution to lay hold of these Occasions in the very Dawn of their Appearance, and to urge the Advantage with a swift and vigorous Prosecution. But where these two good Qualities concur in a Leader, his Enemies ought to fear him then most, when they triumph most over him. *Caesar* knew better than all Men the Solidity of this Maxim, and benefited himself by it on a thousand Occasions, but on none more remarkably, than when he march'd on a sudden with seven thousand Men only, to the Relief of *Cicero*, belieg'd in his Camp, by *Ambiorix* the *Gaul*, who had then newly destroy'd all the Forces of *Sabinus* and *Cotta*, by the Wiliness of a Stratagem. *Caesar*, in the Midst of this March, was intercepted by a numerous Army of the Enemy, already flush'd and made confident, by a Current of Successes. To such a General as *Caesar*, all Grounds were a-like advantageous; he cou'd as easily form a Stratagem, or place an Ambush on an open and unshelter'd Plain as this was, as upon a Mountain or in a Forest. He therefore hastily entrenches himself, contracts the Circuit of his Camp, raises the Height of his Ramparts beyond what was usual, feigns to shut up his Ports with an outside Row of Turfs, and gives Command to his Soldiers to do every Thing with Noise, Complaint and Tumult, as if afraid of the Enemy. The *Gauls*, who had too good an Opinion of themselves to suspect this for Artifice, grew hourly more presumptuous and fearless of Opposition, till at last they became rash enough to approach the very Ports in disorderly Parties, and pull away the Turfs which barricadoed the Entrance; but there *Caesar* took Care to save them further Labour; for observing them under the general Security he had expected, he silently drew up his Soldiers within, and beating down the thin Barriers of Turf, sallied out from all the four Ports at once, with such Fury on his own Part, and such Amazement on the Enemies, that they fled on all Sides before him, and left no Toil to his Sword, but that of wearisome Execution. The *Gauls* had nothing in their Imaginations but the Certainty of Victory, and had suppos'd Defence so little needful, that they were not in Condition so much as to attempt it.

The Histories of all Nations are full of such Examples; but it will suffice to select one more modern from our own, because attended by Consequences which were fatally important.

In the Year 1649, when those execrable Rebels had murder'd their Sovereign, and usurp'd the whole Dominion of *England*; the Marquess of *Ormond* became fortunate in *Ireland*, and reduc'd all that Country to the Obedience of King *Charles* the Second, excepting only the two Cities of *Dublin* and *Londonderry*. To the first of these he laid Siege in Person, with a very numerous Army; the other was at the same Time invest'd by Sir *Robert Steward* and Colonel *Mervin*, with a considerable Body. Every Thing look'd promising; the Royalists exulted; the Rebels despair'd every where; all was so devoted to the Pleasure of the King, that he was upon Point of coming over in Person to take Possession of *Ireland*. Colonel *Michael Jones* was then Governor of *Dublin* for the Parliament, Sir *Charles Coote* of *Londonderry*. It happen'd unfortunately, that these Gentlemen were well skill'd in the Maxim which Occasions this Reflection: And form'd Hopes to make Advantage from the Confidence of the Enemy, by surprizing them in their Security. The Success show'd too fatally, that their Hopes were well grounded; for much about the same Time, both the Governors, without Aid of Correspondence, and wholly unacquainted with each other's Intention, sallied out on their Besiegers, and falling furiously among People who expected nothing but Surrender, they threw them suddenly into such inextricable Confusion, that both the King's Armies were most shamefully defeated, the Sieges both rais'd, and the Disgrace follow'd shortly, by a total Reduction of the Kingdom to the Power of the Rebels, on Arrival of *Cromwell*, their Lieutenant of *Ireland*.

8. *So when within some Island's sea-wash'd Streight.*— I have neither in the first Book nor this second, found Occasion to multiply *Similes*: But as most of the following Books of the Poem are pretty thick set with them, this is as good a Place as any to consider the Nature of this great Ornament to Poetry, than which there is nothing more capable, either of being made delightful or ridiculous, according as it is us'd, discreetly, or at random.

The Use which a Poet ought to make of Comparisons, is to illustrate the Object represented; that is, to enlighten and enlarge the Apprehension of the Reader. The Nature, therefore, of the Thing which is compar'd, must correspond exactly with what it is compar'd to. There must not only be an apparent Resemblance, but a visible Proportion. A Thing low and inconsiderable, may be like enough to something great and magnificent, but then wanting Dignity to appear in its Company, no Poet of Judgment shou'd submit to make Use of it; I will give the Reader an Instance of a very remarkable Fault of this Kind; Sir *Richard Blackmore*, in his *Prince Arthur*, compares the Devil looking down from a Mountain on the *British* Camp, to a Toad on the Border of a Walk, looking up at the Gardener.

*While, with malignant Eyes th' Apostate view'd
Their Host, with Ossa's Message pleas'd, he stood,
Stung deep with Malice, and with Envy torn,
While all his Veins like Etna's Furnace burn.*

Perhaps the *Veins* of the Devil were not so much owing to Sir *Richard's* Forgetfulness, that he was describing a *Spizit*, as to a politic Design of reducing *Satan* to downright *Flesh* and *Blood*, that the Reader conceiving a more humble Opinion of him than he had been taught in his Infancy, might be the better prepar'd for the Toad in the Comparison.

*And Streams of Fire from his red Eye-balls flow'd
Like Lightning, breaking from a low'ring Cloud.
As when a Toad, squat on a Border, spies
The Gard'ner passing by, his bloodshot Eyes,*

*With Spite and Rage inflam'd, dart Fire around
The verdant Walks, and on the flow'ry Ground,
The bloated Vermin loathsome Poison spits,
And swoln and bursting with his Hatred fits
So the fall'n Angel, &c.*

Fallen indeed, if no abler to do harm to Sir Richard's Hero, than his *Toad* to the Gardiner: Where is the terrible Power, the wily restless Malice, the insatiate revengeful Application of this dangerous Enemy to Mankind in Sir Richard's humble Simile? A Toad may be poisonous, but then he may be trod upon, which is, by no Means, the Case of the Devil. If a Poet who introduces Satan, thus enrag'd, would imagine a Comparison to aggrandize the Horror of his Reader's Conception, it must certainly arise from nothing which we are to look down upon; no little venomous inconsiderable Creature: The Elements shou'd war together on such Occasions as these; the Skies shou'd blaze with Lightning; the World reel with Earthquakes; the Sea rise to Heaven; the Poles crack with Thunder, and all Nature groan with Variety of Convulsions. Toad, poison, squat, bloated, spits, vermin, loathsome, swoln, bursting! What Image can arise from such Expressions as these, which is either like or agreeable?

If Sir Richard had been always thus negligent in the Adaption of his Words to his Images, and his Images to the Nature of his Subject, we had miss'd in Prince Arthur, the following Description of Spirits employ'd for raising a Mist to favour the Escape of the Saxon Fleet.

*Last, the slow Powers he call'd from humid Dens,
Who rule the Marshes, Lakes, and stagnate Fens:
The humble Fiends their haughty Prince obey:
Some from dark Caverns, far remote from Day,
From every hollow Rock and gloomy Vault,
Crude Exhalations and raw Vapours brought:
Some from the stagnant Ponds and reedy Shores,
Deep Bogs and moist uncultivated Moors,
Drive the dull Reeks, and shove the hazy Stores.*

This is beautiful, just, lively, and surprizing. 'Tis Pity he did not always describe after the same Manner.

To say Truth, no Simile at all shou'd have been introduc'd in the Place I have been complaining against. The natural Conception of a Reader can represent to his Fancy the Idea of the Devil looking angry from a Mountain, much better than any common Image of Things known can present it to his Memory. A Comparison is never to be made, but where the Object to be describ'd is less known, or less conceivable than something else, which, being of equal Grandeur and Importance, will also illustrate and rivet it on the Understanding.

Tasso, in the same Case, has been guilty of the same Fault; he introduces the Devil, observing with much Malice and Fury, the Success of the Franks at the Siege of Jerusalem.

*While thus the Christians their Machines prepare,
And ply th' intended Siege with restless Care;
Th' immortal Enemy of Earth and Skies,
Gainst their fear'd Labours, glar'd his livid Eyes.
There, when he saw their warlike Toils succeed,
Bit his black Lips, which with wild Venom bleed,
And like mad Bulls, when they with Dogs engage,
Spur'd up Hell's Floor, and bellow'd out his Rage.*

Sir Richard will allow me, however, to acknowledge that the Italian has gone much nearest in his Resemblance; but still a Bull and a Devil have an Immenfity of Distance between them. The Descriptions and Simile's which we meet with in Mr. Milton, give us quite other Ideas of this dreadful Rebel-Angel.

*Scarce had he ceas'd when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the Shore. His pond'rous Shield
Behind him cast, the broad Circumference
Hung on his Shoulders, like the Moon:
His Spear, to equal whith the tallest Pine,
Hewn on Norwegian Hills, to be the Mast
Of some great Admiral, were but a Wand
He walk'd with to support uneasy Steps
Over the burning Mark.*

Again—Forth came in Order the infernal Peers,
'Midst them their mighty Paramount, who seem'd
Alone, th' Antagonist of Heaven! nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor! with Pomp suprem,
And Godlike, imitated State, him round
A Globe of fiery Seraphim enclos'd.

And again ——— Satan, above the Rest,
 In Shape and Gesture, proudly eminent!
 Stood like a Tower. Nor yet his Form appear'd
 Less than Arch-Angel ruin'd; and th' Excess
 Of Glory obscur'd: As when the Sun new ris'n,
 Shorn of his Beams, looks through the misty Air.
 Deep Scars of Thunder had entrench'd his Face.
 Care on his faded Cheeks sat under Brows
 Of dauntless Courage, and confederate Pride.

Having nam'd Mr. Milton, I am well enough aware, that Sir Richard may endeavour a Justification from that great Poet's Example, since he has made Use in another Place of this very Simile of a Toad, when he also is describing Satan; but pray observe with what Difference, as well in the Occasion as the Conduct.

Satan, after having chang'd himself into many different Shapes to avoid a Discovery, by these Angelick Guards which were plac'd about Paradise, is met with, at last, by one of the Parties.

So saying, on he led his radiant Files,
 Dazling the Moon. These to the Bower direct,
 In search of whom they sought. Him there they found,
 Squat, like a Toad, close at the Ear of Eve.

Besides his Necessity of providing against Discovery (of which he was in no Danger in Sir Richard's Poem) he takes the Shape of a Toad as most proper, while Eve was asleep, to approach her closely, conceal'd among the Flowers and sweet Herbs she was laid upon.

Assaying by his Devilish Art, to reach
 The Organs of her Fancy; there to forge
 Illusions as he lists.

Observe here, that the Devil is in no Rage when thus compar'd; but on the contrary, under much Terror, and endeavouring to deceive and circumvent, and therefore oblig'd in Policy to assume that Form, which was rather suitable to his End than answerable to his Power. But when he appears in his proper Likeness, the very Angels are represented as terrified, and starting back with Amazement.

Him, thus intent, Ithuriel with his Spear
 Touch'd lightly, for no Falsehood can endure
 Touch of Celestial Temper, but returns
 Perforce to its own Likeness.— Up he starts,
 Discover'd and surpriz'd: As when a Spark
 Lights on a nitrous Heap, the smutty Grain,
 With sudden Blaze diffus'd, inflames the Air:
 So started up in his own Shape the Fiend;
 Back stepp'd the two fair Angels, half amaz'd,
 So sudden to behold the grisly King.

Nothing of this is little, nothing diminishing; the Whole is natural, terrible, majestick, surprizing, and becoming the Dignity of the Subject it relates to.

A Simile shou'd, if possible, be like in all its Parts. It is not enough, that some one Quality of the Comparison resembles some one Part or Nature of the Object it is compar'd to. Homer has been infinitely guilty of this Error; hurried, as it were, away with the Rapidity of his Imagination, he seldom staid to weigh any more of a Simile, than that very Part of it which suited his Purpose. Not mindful enough, that upon starting an Object to which many Qualities are common, the Apprehension of the Reader is not, perhaps, at leisure to examine which particular Quality includes the Resemblance, and therefore discerns not any Likeness at all, but with such Trouble and Application as totally destroy the very End of a Simile: For if the Design of this Ornament be to illustrate a Description, it ought not certainly to be found obscure in itself.

There is, in the noble Greek Poet above-mention'd, a famous Comparison of Ajax, who retreats flow from an overpowering Crowd of Trojans, to an Ass in an Enclosure, surrounded and beaten by the Sticks of the Village, but walking gravely, notwithstanding, toward the Gap he came in at, and stopping very frequently to eat in his Way. Monsieur Dacier, Bossu, and all the French Criticks, who are not Converts to Monsieur Perault's Observations, have taken a great Deal of Pains to justify this Simile of Homer's; but in my Opinion, they are all mistaken, not only in the Defence, but in the very Accusation. It is not so much the Ass that deserves Blame, since he was in those Days a Beast of great Quality; it is rather, that the Resemblance is partial where it ought to have been total. The stiff reluctant Receding of Ajax from his Enemies, is certainly well hit in the Obstinacy of the Ass; but where is that Part of the Comparison which shou'd enliven to our Imaginations, his frequent Return to Slaughter, his Impatience of Soul, that Fierceness, Indignation and revengeful Intrepidity which the Poet's Description had also prepar'd us to expect in his Simile? The Ass, without Doubt, was loth to depart as Ajax, but he was neither so apt to be angry, nor so dangerous if he became so.

Comparisons, to conclude this Reflection, can never be proper in *Passions* or violent Emotions of Mind. The Imagination is then too much transported and enflam'd, to cast about for cool Resemblances: But in the Mouth of the Poet, that is to say, in the Course of the *Narration* and not in the *Speeches*, they are beautiful and necessary. They describe *Passion* well, though they do not express it. And to say all in a Word, where *Description* alone appears too weak to imprint an Idea on the Mind of a Reader, there the only effectual Remedy is to have Recourse to a *Simile*.

9. *A green Pavilion of unmatch'd Extent.*— It has been always, and still remains, a Custom among the eastern Nations, to affect a Magnificence, even to Ostentation, in the Size and Ornaments of their *Tents*; with some of which they load six or eight Waggon: And this Part of their Equipage is the greatest Incumbrance in the March of a *Turkish*, *Persian*, or *Indian* Army. The Royal Pavilion is generally such as here describ'd. They have Walls within Walls, and Offices, Galleries, and all the detach'd Apartments as convenient as their Palaces. Nothing, in fine, is more magnificent than one of their Sovereign's Tents, for the most Part lin'd throughout with the richest and most lively colour'd Silks; illumin'd through square Lettice Windows, compos'd of twisted Cord-work of Gold-thread or Wire, with precious Stones at each Knot; the very Tent-Ropes are Silk, and the many Posts which support it, plated over with Silver.

10. *Circled by Kings, and taller by the Head.* I have wilfully, in this Place, transgressed a Precept, which Mr. Dennis, if I remember right, has somewhere endeavoured to inculcate, *That all personal Descriptions are languid*. I agree with him, that they are so, when too often introduc'd, and without End or Necessity; but that they are every where languid, I can by no means allow him. One of the Reasons which that Gentleman gives, in some of his critical Writings, why the Heroes, who are introduc'd in a Poem, should have their Inclinations and Affections well mark'd and distinguished, is, because, says he, we become as it were acquainted with them by that Means, and always interest our selves more warmly in Events which relate to those with whom we are intimate, than in the Fortune of others who are altogether Strangers to us. This was certainly well argued: But does it not then follow as a Consequence, that to become perfectly acquainted with a *Man*, we must see as well as hear him? Suppose Mr. Dennis had convers'd with Mr. Milton after he was become blind; Mr. Milton cou'd never have been so satisfactorily acquainted with Mr. Dennis, as Mr. Dennis with Mr. Milton. The same Reason will hold good, why a Reader of my Poem will know *Gideon* more perfectly, after seeing him in Description, than he cou'd have done, by observing whatever he says and does, without having him also plac'd in Person before his Eyes, by which Means he does not only conceive the *Nature*, but the very *Figure* of the Hero.

11. *O'er their close Heads the streaming Ensigns flow.*— If I said nothing concerning this Line, it might perhaps be objected, that I make the Use of Ensigns too ancient; but I have Authority enough on my Side: And because I shall frequently speak of them in the Course of the Poem, I will endeavour to convince the Reader that I do it with Justice.

It will make nothing against me, that they are not mention'd by *Homer*. It is equally certain, that above a thousand Years after, they were not brought into Use, in the Armies of the *Romans*; where the Legionary Ensign was no waving Colours, but a solid carv'd *Eagle* of Wood, gilt or painted, and carried on the Top of a *Pike*, by the *Aquilifer* or *Eagle-Bearer*. They had, in like Manner, the Figure of a *Hand* on the Staffs of their *Maniples*: To say nothing of an innumerable Variety of Beasts, *Birds*, and *Creatures* of all Kinds, which serv'd them for *Ensigns*, as we may gather from their Historians and military Writers; nay, in the Infancy of their Wars, they have not scrupled to march after a small *Wad* of *Hay* made fast to a *Pole*, and fought under it as effectually as if it had been a *Colours* or an *Eagle*.

But the Custom of the *Greeks* or *Romans* will conclude nothing against the *Hebrews*. The tenth Chapter of *Numbers* informs us sufficiently, that the *Israelites* had *Standards*, and in particular, how their Marches were guided by and regulated under them.

In the first Place went the *Standard* of *Judah*; then that of *Reuben*; then that of *Ephraim*; and fourthly, the *Standard* of *Dan* in the Rear of their Marches. What the *Form* of these *Standards* may have been, we are no where directly told; but since the particular Instructions which were given by *Moses* concerning the *blue silk* Curtains of the *Tabernacle*, and many other Ornaments of various fine Colours, are convincive enough, that the Use of wrought Silks, with figures and Embroidery, was very frequent among them, there is certainly poetical Authority enough to justify a Description of their *Ensigns* after the Manner I have follow'd.

12. *Gradual, the floting Roar of War subsides.*— It is not only a natural Imitation, but a necessary Artifice in a Poet, to prepare the Ear by the Solemnity of a previous profound *Silence*, for the better Reception of some intended Discourse. The six Lines which begin with the foregoing Verse do therefore describe the *Soldiers*, as sunk into an awful and majestick Kind of Silence, in Respect to the Council to be held by their *Leaders*, not only because it is in Truth the Custom in eastern Armies, but because the Reader being caught, as it were, insensibly, by the Description he is perusing, shou'd himself become hush'd and surpriz'd into something of an Expectation that may prepare him to regard with *Attention*, all that passes in the Council: Which is important enough to deserve the Precaution, because it gives Beginning to a Debate from the Progress whereof rise Events of the highest Consequence, toward the main Action of the Poem. This I look upon as a Method not unlikely to succeed; and I have therefore, as the Reader will observe, repeated the Practice on Occasions of like Nature.

13. *Midian, the mighty Founder of your Name,*

Was even as Isaac was, our Abraham's Son:— After *Sarah* was dead, *Abraham* married again; the Name of this Wife was *Keturah*. He had many Children by Her, and most of them became Founders

ders of considerable States. Her fourth Son was this *Midian* of whom *Gideon* here speaks; and the *Midians* were Brothers of *Israel*, because Descendants of *Abraham*. Of this *Gideon* takes Occasion to remind them, as a Motive which might be capable of softning their Disposition. But he falls not immediately and without Preparation, into this Reflection. He begins his Address by Expressions of his particular Sentiments, that so, what Favour he had shown to *Oreb*, might rather appear the Effect of a natural Greatness in his Mind, than the Insinuation of his *Artifice*; in which *last* Light it wou'd most probably have been taken, had he not with some Circumlocution display'd first his *Generosity*, and by Degrees fallen artfully upon the Descent of the *Midianites*; not as a Consideration from which he expected any Favour at their Hands, but as a Motive which had induc'd him to show Respect to a Prince of their Country.

It may indeed be observ'd, as well in *low* Life as *high*, that the general Propensity of Mankind to think meanly of *Others*, perhaps from a Consciousness of designing poorly *themselves*, makes the Use of little *Arts* and *Disguises* of Intention, sometimes necessary for Attainment of Ends, which in the Grandeur and Sincerity of their Motives are infinitely *above* them. It is true, all *Disguises* of this Kind, however innocent in their Nature, have something of *Diffimulation*, which a Man of Virtue wou'd not *chuse*, if he cou'd advance his Designs as successfully without them. But in Pursuit of the worthiest and most generous Actions, a Depravity of Mind which we meet with on all Sides, makes many Steps necessary in the *politic* Regard, which are not obvious in the *Moral*.

It is also easy to be remark'd in the common Accidents of Life, with what Difficulty Men are brought to listen seriously to what is remote from their own ordinary Manner of thinking. Great and noble Designs soar too high for Apprehension. They must therefore be presented to a vulgar Imagination, with something of a Shadow or Diminishment thrown over them. After such a Precaution, *That* may come to be consider'd as illustrious, which before was inconceivable; Men look down with Delight upon the Sun-Beams reflected from the Water, but they become dazled and confounded with the Fierceness of his Lustre, if they fix their Eyes stedfastly on his *naked Emanations*. How finely was it distinguish'd by our excellent *Verulam*? The *lowest* Rank of Virtues engross the *Praise* of the *People*; the *Middle* Rank their *Amazement*; but for the *Highest* and most glorious of all, says he, they have no *Sense* or *Perception*.

14. *Even to these Plains where Midian now encamps, our fiercest Foe,*

We were by Midian led:— After *Moses* had kill'd the *Egyptian*, whom he observ'd to strike a *Hebrew*, he fled for Safety of his Life, out of *Egypt*, into that Part of *Midian* which lay along the North-west Shore of the Red-Sea. There wandering disconsolate and uncertain what to-do, he fate down by a *Well*. To this *Well* came seven Daughters of *Jethro*, a great Prince, and of priestly Authority in *Midian*. They were hinder'd from drawing Water, and insulted by a rude and licentious Band of Shepherds who came to the *Well* before them. *Moses*, provok'd to Resentment by the Injuries which he saw offer'd to the Virgins, exerted himself in their Cause, and drew Water for them himself, assisting them to dispatch their Business so much sooner than Ordinary, that their Father was surpriz'd at the Suddenness of their Return; and upon his asking the Reason, they acquainted him with all the Particulars of their Adventure; he reprov'd them for having left their Defender unrewarded, and inviting him to his House, employ'd him in his Service, and married him to *Zipporah*, one of the seven Daughters.

Moses was in this Place, and under this Condition, when God appear'd to him in the Burning-Bush, and commission'd his Return into *Egypt* for Deliverance of his Countrymen; which when he had perform'd, and brought *Israel* cross the Red-Sea to his Father-in-Law's Neighbourhood, the old Man came to visit him, and brought his Wife to him. He was a Man of great Wisdom; for it was on his Advice solely, that *Moses* reduc'd the Administration of Power into subordinate Dependencies, from Rulers of Thousands, down to Rulers of Tens, as he confesses in the 18th of *Exodus*. This was the *Jethro* of whom *Gideon* now reminds the five Kings, that he was so far from bearing Enmity to the *Hebrews*, that he left his own Country and Relations, to guide the Army of *Israel* through the difficult Passages of the Desert, into that very Land which now the *Midianites* are endeavouring to force from them.

15. *Israel he knew, assisted so, no separate Claim cou'd lay,*

Since Midian's Sons were Abraham's Race as notably as they.— Having before reminded the Kings how obligingly the *Hebrews* had been treated by one of the wisest and greatest Men of *Midian*; he comes now to insinuate a Supposition, that this Favour of *Jethro's* had partly been owing to a *political* Expectation, and partly to a *moral* Affection; as if such Assistance was design'd as a Means to entitle the *Midianites* to a Share, not only in the *Conquest*, but also in the *Division* of the Land of Promise. The Promise had been made to the Sons of *Abraham*, and *Midian* was such, as unquestionably as *Jacob*. Under Favour of this Reflection, *Gideon* represents the Likelihood there was, that *Israel* assisted by *Midian*, wou'd have regarded them as Brothers, and shar'd the *Conquest* between them.

To reduce this general Supposition to a particular Application, he hastens to infer, that it might not yet be too late for both Nations to find their Interest in such an Alliance. As yet, says he, we possess but the poorest Part of *Canaan*,

16. *Wide from Gaza, northward spread,*

Lie Countries we regard with Dread.— And here he proceeds to represent the immense Wealth of *Tyre* and *Sidon*; insinuating at the same Time their Weakness, as the likeliest Motives to incline the *Midian* Kings to consent to a Peace with *Israel*, where little more was to be got than had been taken already, and uniting their Forces, to make War on that People, who were rich enough to reward, at large, all the Danger of the Enterprize. This was *Gideon's* main Hope; nor does it carry along with it any unreasonable or improbable Circumstance. He may easily be suppos'd to have heard some Rumour, that such a Design had been debated among the Princes of *Midian*; or his starting this Proposal may be attributed to the Influence of God's Spirit delighting to operate by apparent second Causes, and therefore inspiring the Thoughts

Thoughts of *Gideon* with what having been previously consulted among the Kings, though wholly unknown to him, must of Consequence become a Means of dividing them by Jealousies, and hastening forward that Overthrow which God had decreed they shou'd fall under.

The humane Prudence of *Gideon*, however, looks no farther in this Hope, than that being naturally back'd by the Friendship and Interest of *Oreb*, the Avarice of *Zeb*, the Rashness of *Zebah*, and the Pride and Ambition of *Zalmunna*, all whose general Characters common Fame must have acquainted him with before; the Proposal to be made of their warring on *Tyre*, might have a fair Chance to take Effect; which if resolv'd upon in Alliance with *Israel*, his Country wou'd become free, by changing *Enemies* into *Friends*; and if attempted, without Regard to the *Hebrews*, the Withdrawing the hostile Army wou'd supply him with Occasion to excite the People to assemble for that Deliverance, which he had Reason to believe he shou'd be able to procure them.

17. *Oreb with fierce and sudden Rapture fir'd.*— This adds a new Link to the Connexion of the Episode concerning *Oreb*. Had not *Gideon* taken him Prisoner, he cou'd not have set him at Liberty. Had he not ow'd to *Gideon* the Obligation of his Freedom, he wou'd not so warmly have supported his Interest. And had he not been generous and open in his Nature, he wou'd not have been transported to so sudden and so warm a Renewal of his old Proposal. He wou'd rather have weigh'd with Caution, on the Surprise of such an Incident, the great Likelihood there was, That the Concurrence of his known Opinion, with this unexpected Proposal of an Enemy, by whom he had, without any visible Cause, been just set at Liberty, and whom he had brought with him to the Camp, wou'd rise a dangerous Jealousy among the Kings, of some Design and Combination between himself and the *Hebrews*: And the rather, because his Kingdom will hereafter be found to have lain close upon the Borders of *Israel*, and had been formerly at War with the other *Midian* States which were remoter to the Eastward. But it wou'd have destroy'd the main Tendency of the Poem, had *Oreb* foreseen and prevented these Jealousies: He was therefore to be represented of a Temper, and under Circumstances, which make it reasonable for him to take contrary Measures.

18. *Deep in his labour-furrow'd Look, his Avarice stood engrav'd.*— What the Critics call the *Manners*, I believe will be better understood under the Word *Affections*; they being properly those Inclinations or Dispositions of the Mind, which ought plainly to be mark'd in all the chief Personages introduc'd in a Poem, as being the only Rule or Measure we can have, whereby to examine either the Justness or Impropriety of the *Thoughts*. A *rash* Man must not speak like a *Wary*, a *proud* Man like an *Humble*. The Inclinations of the Personages are first discover'd by the Words which the Poet puts into their Mouths; and he is oblig'd to preserve and continue the Likeness after once he has given it. The Difference of Men's *Affections* gives a Difference to their Actions; and hence it follows, That a Poem can never be full of pathetic Variety, and therefore never delightful, where this Rule of distinguishing the Characters is not observ'd strictly and with Judgment.

But there is no Manner of Necessity that the Poet shou'd so distinguish all the Persons he introduces. That wou'd serve to distract and overburthen the Memory. It suffices, if the Rule is observ'd, in the Chief and most active of the Number, on whose Desires and Determinations depend the Incidents of the Poem. Where the Poet borrows Names out of History, he is bound to preserve a Likeness between the general Opinion conceiv'd of those Characters, and the Qualities he represents them possess'd of in his Poem. But where History is dark, or where the Characters are invented, he has Liberty to suppose and affirm as he pleases; upon Condition that he imitates with Judgment, and neither gives any *Affections* unbecoming the Condition, nor deduces *Actions* improbably and unnaturally from *Inclinations*, which cou'd not reasonably have produc'd them.

Our Criticks have borrow'd an Observation from the *French*, which they have either mistaken or misrepresented. They suppose it a Breach of the *Becomingness* of the Inclinations, to introduce a *covetous Prince* in an Epic Poem; because *Avarice*, say they, is a low Vice. It is a natural one however, and a very frequent one among Kings. What Likeness cou'd a Poet have preserv'd, introducing such a Prince as our *Henry the VIIth*, if he must have been restrain'd from making *Avarice* a chief Mark of his Character? If Poetry is *Imitation*, and Covetousness a Vice inseparable from some Princes, 'tis a palpable Contradiction to bid us preserve the natural Likeness of those Princes, and yet have nothing to do with their *Avarice*.

Bosju, who has misled us into this Inconsistency, through a Mistake of his Meaning, has yet, in my Opinion, express'd that Meaning as plainly as was possible. He observes, first, that Covetousness is no suitable Quality for a King or an Emperor. But then immediately upon it he distinguishes thus: *There is, however, one Species of Avarice very proper to Kings, that is, the Desire of amassing mighty Treasures, which differs widely from the sordid base Avarice which is meant in this Place.* The Distinction is just and visible; and the Avarice of *Zeb* is no other than an Eagerness for War, out of a restless Desire to heap *Treasure* upon *Treasure*. But I shall say more concerning the *Affections*, as Occasions arise hereafter.

19. *Pity pleads for them,— We can do no less,*

Than let them keep in Peace their poor Remains.— There is nothing more common, and at the same Time more provoking, than the Struggles which may be observ'd in vicious Natures, to shadow their Qualities under the Resemblances of Virtue. A Coward declaims feelingly on the Benefits of Caution. A pusillanimous Bashfulness assumes the Merit of Modesty. A proud Man talks with Ecstasy on the Presence of Decorum. And every Fault is watchful and solicitous to conceal or disguise it self among the nearest Appearances of Reason and Discretion.

Zeb therefore, in this first Speech he makes, keeping close to his Character, pretends distant Motives. He gives his Vote for the *Tyrian* War, not only because the Land is *rich*, but because the Intent is *worthy*. Since *Israel* is Brother of *Midian*, it is hard to press on their *Poverty*. Their Oppression is *unjust*, and therefore let them *buy* it off by an *Assessment*. He *pities* them, and therefore let them keep the *little* they have *left*. In all this, his Avarice is discern'd through his Pretences. The Source of his Mind being tainted with the Vice, it runs down in muddy Mixture with the Current of his Reasons.

20. *Let us, at least, be safe, e'er we aspire.*— *Agag*, who speaks next, discovers a Disposition very contrary to *Zeb's*. He is wise, brave, and moderate; his Experience has taught him rather to *doubt* than to *conclude*. He reflects on the Hazard of beginning a *new* War before an *old* one was determin'd. He considers the Courage and Ambition of *Oreb*, together with his Power, and the Situation of his Kingdom. From all which Reflections, and from the Liberty receiv'd by *Oreb*, from this very *Gideon*, who is come now with a Proposal, the very same which that Prince had insisted on before; it appear'd reasonable to suspect, that some dangerous Design might be on Foot between *Oreb* and the *Hebrews*. But *Agag*, as a prudent and moderate Prince, however necessary he finds it to insinuate his Suspicion, goes cautiously about it, and beginning in general and distant Hints, comes closer by Degrees, rather aiming his Reflections at the *Hebrews* than at *Oreb*, whose Temper he well knew wou'd incline him to take Fire at the first Glance of a Reproach level'd any Thing directly.

Having therefore insinuated his Apprehension, that the *Hebrews* contriv'd this Plot to get rid of an Enemy, he proceeds to expose the Argument of *Kindred*, by showing that the *Tyrians*, against whom the War was propos'd, were as much their Brothers, reckoning but from *Noah*, as the *Israelites* wou'd pretend to be, computing from *Abraham*. Then he forms the Particulars of a Dream, and relates it, with Design to persuade the Kings, that *Gideon*, who was now but a contemptible Enemy, if assisted by *Oreb*, and not prevented by the rest, wou'd suddenly become mighty enough to overthrow their whole Confederacy.

21. *Last Night, a strange, a thrice-repeated Dream.*— This Dream, which I imagine to have been feign'd by *Agag*, for the Purposes above-mention'd, was *real* in a *Midian* Soldier, who, we are told in the Text, related it to his Companion, within Hearing of *Gideon* and *Phurah*. I believe, however, that *Gideon* was sent by God into the Camp of *Midian*, for no other Purpose, than that he might hear the Dream so related, as a Strengthening and Encouragement to his Army; for he cou'd not certainly stand in need of it himself, who had before been inspir'd by the miraculous Descent of an Angel on Purpose. At least, whatever was the real Motive of his going, it wou'd effectually have ruin'd his Character, to have represented him in the Poem, as dispirited enough, to have ask'd more Encouragement than the Appearance of an Angel. Having therefore no Occasion for this Dream, in respect to *Gideon* himself, I have bestow'd it on *Agag*.

The Dream being related, *Agag*, still apprehensive of *Oreb's* Resentment, resolves to add something that may express his Regard for that Prince, and insinuate a Belief, That this Dream may, perhaps, be the mere Work of *Fancy*, and a Matter of no *Meaning*. But *Oreb*, hot and violent in the Consciousness of his Innocence, and discerning with Indignation the artful Purpose of *Agag*, snatches furiously at the insinulative *Perhaps*, and interrupting the Discourse design'd, breaks out into a Torrent of Rage and Invectives against *Agag*, without Regard to the Causes or Justice of his Suspicions.

Every Part of this Speech serves still more plainly to mark out the Inclinations of *Oreb*; so here are three of the five Kings distinguish'd, by their *Affections*; as are also the other Two, in their Parts of the Debate, which immediately follows.

22. *Were Navies ours, what cou'd not Midian do?*— The *Midian* Nations were possess'd of all the three *Arabia's*, but split into innumerable little States, and divided from each other by barren and almost impracticable Mountains and vast Desarts. The *Arabs*, their Descendants, though they own a Kind of general Dependence on the *Sultan*, continue to this Day under Government of distinct petty Lords, without Union or Ambition, contented, as they have Reason to be, with their Possession of the most pleasant and noblest Regions of the Universe: Enjoying the Diversions of Hunting and Horsemanship, and concerning themselves little with the Transactions of other Parts of the World. The great Actions of the *Saracens* in former Ages, may convince us that it is fortunate for *Asia*, *Europe* and *Africa*, into all which they have immediate Openings, that this easy Disposition prevents them from any sudden and furious Excursions on the Territories of their Neighbourhood. The bold and warlike Genius of those fatal Enemies to Christianity above-nam'd, demonstrable enough in the over-running of *Spain*, the Design upon *France*, and the Conquest of all *Africa*, by the famous *Caliph Almanzor*, may apprise us sufficiently of their natural Intrepidity; and were they Subjects to one Prince, Ambition wou'd soon reduce their Fierceness into Discipline; after which they wou'd be able to pour out upon the World on all Sides, more dreadful and more numerous Invasions, than ever *Goths*, *Vandals* or *Tartars* have astonish'd Mankind with.

The natural Impediment they lie under as to Marches by Land, by Reason of the Interposition of huge Desarts and Mountains, might suddenly be remov'd by their general Use of *Shipping*; for which no People under Heaven are more commodiously seated; as any Man will be convinc'd, who takes Notice, That all their immense Dominions are encompass'd by the Sea, and that noble navigable River, the *Euphrates*, the almost endless Windings of whose Shores are cover'd thick with the finest Forests in the Universe, for all Things necessary to Ship-building. They are separated from *Egypt* and *Aethiopia* by the Red-Sea, which runs up to the North-west, till it almost touches the Mediterranean. *Phœnicia* (which *Zebah* in the Poem proposes such Advantages from the Conquest of) had made them Masters of the *Levant*, and open'd them a ready Outlet on the finest Parts of *Europe*. From the North Part of this Coast, it is a very Step to the *Euphrates*, which runs South, and South-east through a delightful, vast and fruitful Tract of Land into the *Persian*

Persian Gulph; and this last lets them out upon the main *Indian Sea*, which is their Boundary to the Eastward.

Zebah then, however rash a Proposer, was undoubtedly in the Right as to the Benefits to be expected on their becoming Masters of *Navies*. He did not so well foresee a Kind of natural Incapacity which they were under, of extending their Advantages when they shou'd be able to gain them, from the Divisions of Government into which they were broken, and which cou'd never have united with that Firmness which is requisite for aggrandizing a Dominion. But *Zebah* is too hot to be mistaken for a *Politician*; and his Errors of this Kind become him better than Gravity.

Navigation was first practis'd on the West Side of *Asia*, and from thence introduc'd over *Europe* by the active trading People of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, almost two thousand Years before the Birth of *Christ*. Their *Merchants*, says the Prophet, are *Princes*, and their *Traders* the Honourable of the Earth. They took the Name of *Phœnicians*, from *Phœnix*, Son of *Agenor*, who return'd out of *Egypt* in order to fortify his Country against *Joshua*, which was done too so effectually, that the *Hebrews*, in the very highest of their Glory, were never able to master the Sea-Coast; but, on the contrary, became oblig'd, under the Reign of their wise *Salomon*, to sue to *Hiram* King of *Tyre*, for Ship-builders and Mariners, to set out a Fleet from some of their own Ports on the North Shore of the Red-Sea, to bring Gold from the *East-Indies*. This Design was renew'd once again, in the Time of *Jehosaphat*, but his Fleet, as soon as built, being dash'd in Pieces by a Storm, the Spirit of the People cou'd hold out no longer, but declin'd from that Time forward, all Designs of Marine Power. And to this impolitick Neglect, may, perhaps, be imputed the Non-encrease of their Dominion, and the visible and humane outward Cause of their Extirpation; first by the *Assyrians*, and finally, by the *Romans*.

The Strength and Advantages which a marine Application gives a People, were even so long ago as this, apparent enough, in the Defence which they enabled the single City of *Tyre* to make, first, against *Nebuchadonneszar*; and then against *Alexander* the Great, the last of whom spent more Time, and underwent more Fatigue in the Reduction of this one Town, than in the Conquest of all the richest and most glorious Cities of *Asia*. By Aid of their Shipping, the *Phœnicians* sent out Colonies to possess and People many Places, as well in *Europe* as in *Africa*. They founded the City of *Cadiz* in *Spain*; and that of *Carthage* in *Numidia*, the Inhabitants of which last ow'd their Name of *Punic* but to a Contraction of the Word *Phœnic*, in Memory of these People, from whom originally they descended.

It can neither be unpleasing nor unuseful to the Reader, if having here so tempting an Opportunity, I say something concerning the Invention and different Forms of Shipping. The *Ark*, which was a huge Ship, shap'd and built by immediate Direction from God, was, unquestionably, the first Vessel for Navigation that was known in the World. For, had there been Ships in Use before, more Families than *Noah's* might have sav'd themselves by their Means. As the *Ark* then was the Original of Ship-building, one may reasonably wonder how they came to vary so much from their Pattern. The *Ark* was flat-bottom'd, our Ships are sharp downward; the Proportion of the *Ark* was six Parts in Length to one in Breadth; in our modern Ships, it is only three long to one broad; though, as well for Ease as Expedition, the old Proportion might be demonstrated to be preferable.

The *Ark* was broad-prow'd and square-stern'd, like our West-Country Barges; whereas we sharpen the Heads of our Vessels to an Angle, and suppose that this enables them to cut Water the Better. Now all this, if I err not, is a palpable Mistake, for a square Beam of Timber will be found, upon Trial, to move faster through the Water, by an equal Force, either of Pulsion or Traction, than a Beam of the same Dimensions sharpen'd forward to an Angle, as acute as is possible; nay, the sharper the Angle, the heavier will be the Motion. To comprehend this the more easily, let it be consider'd, that no Vessel has made Way through the Water resisting her Passage, till the Water has pass'd away from her greatest Breadth, be it in what Part of her it will. The contrary Extream from that in present Use, were the most pardonable of the Two; for a Ship that is sharpen'd to an Angle behind, and broad and obtusely form'd in her Head, will move swiftest through the Water. The common Shape of *Fishes* may demonstrate the Truth of this Observation, however odd it may appear. They have their Residence and Being in the Water, and God most certainly gave them therefore a Form that wou'd help and not impede them in their necessary Motion, through their own proper Element; yet *Fishes*, we see, are all shap'd broadest forward, and lessen away toward their Tails.

This Deviation then from the original Form of the *Ark*, must have proceeded from some other Cause than Improvement. Men seldom improve upon Works of God's directing. The *Ark* was not only the largest Ship which Mankind ever saw, but when the World was all Ocean, and Heav'n and Earth mix'd in Tempest, must, doubtless, have met with Weather far more stormy and trying than any Vessel can now be suppos'd liable to. A flat-bottom'd Ship, too, draws much less Water than one of ours of like Size, and carries almost double the Weight, of any Kind of Burthen.

Nor is this Notion of the Advantage of broad Bottoms, a mere Speculation. The People of *China*, who have, from the highest Antiquity, abounded more in Shipping than all the World besides them, and who have from twelve to fifteen thousand great Vessels at a Time, upon some of their Rivers, built flat at Head, at Stern, and at Bottom, to this very Day; and are found to fize their Vessels after the exact Proportion of the *Ark*. This remarkable Difference in the Form of these People's Shipping, from the Practice of our western World, will point us, I believe, to a Reason which may account for it.

The World was first repeopled, after the Deluge, from the Tracts about *Ararat*, where *Noah's Ark* rested. Thence *Ophir* and *Havilah*, the Sons of *Joktan*, led their Followers over *Ganges*, to inhabit the *East Indies*. The Passage thither by Land is so mountainous, so woody, and so desert, and was much more

more so at that Time, that there is no humane Likelihood of their having cross'd on Foot such impracticable Tracts, and neglected a very obvious Convenience in many vast and deep Rivers, which, though they wou'd have encreas'd their Obstructions in a Journey over Land, were tempting Helps to their navigative Motions, and must have encourag'd their Curiosity to a Length of Search by Water. These People then, who had such Rivers in their Way, found Occasion to build Vessels after the Manner of the Ark, which may very probably have remain'd whole till that Time, and long after; and by Means of these Vessels, coasting still further Eastward, they rested, at last, in the fertile, delightful, and well-water'd Plains of China, transmitting the Form of their Ship-building to the Practice of their Posterity.

Nimrod, on the contrary, who led out his Colonies, through a vast Length of Inland toward the West, and a little Southward, met every where before him, noble Champaign, and the finest Plains in the World, throughout *Babylon, Chaldaea*, and the other Scenes of his Actions, and the famous Settlements of his Posterity. These People, therefore, finding little or no Use for *Shipping*, as the other had done who went Eastward, forgot, by Degrees, the Dimensions and Shape of the Ark; but when, afterwards, *Egypt* and all *Africa*, with much of *West Asia*, and all *Europe*, were peopled by their Posterity, they retain'd by Tradition, so much Knowledge of this Ark, as only serv'd to assure them, that such a Vessel had been made, without any particular Comprehension of the Manner.

This general Idea serv'd, however, to instruct them, well enough for crossing Rivers, and other little Uses, to thrust Oziers through a Keel, and bow them upward on both Sides, where they fasten'd their Points into a Couple of long Poles, which were tied together at both Ends, and kept wide asunder by cross Bars fix'd between them. This was easy and expeditious, requiring neither a Necessity of Skill, nor Variety of Instruments. When the *Ribs* of their Vessel were thus put together, they interwove them with other Twigs, till they became strong enough to be trod upon, and then cover'd the Outfides of their Boat with Bull-Hides sew'd together, and coarsely greas'd or oil'd over, for keeping out Water.

See here then the very Foundation of our present *sharp* and narrowing Form of Ship-building. We may add also, that they found it easy to hollow the Trunks of Trees, whose Outfides growing naturally round, they never staid to make *flat* their Bottoms, but left the Outside as they found it; and as for those who afterward built much larger and stronger Vessels, they form'd their *Keels* and *Ribs*, however, after the Manner of the little Boats they took Rattern from. For not considering that this Shape of their Boats had been rather the Effect of their *Ignorance* than their *Art*, they suppos'd that what had been so long in Use, was to stand as a Rule, and never went about to examine it, in Comparison with a better Manner. Examples of Trees hollow'd into Boats, we see common enough among all the *Indian Nations*. And those of Twig-work and Hides were in Use among our *British* Ancestors, where *Cesar* learn'd to make them, and found considerable Advantage by that Knowledge, long afterward, when they so timely transported his Army over *Sicoris*, in the *Spanish War*, which he push'd against *Petreius* and *Afranius*. We find in *Lucan* a very pretty Description of them:

*They springy Twigs of limber Ozier take,
Which, water'd, freely bend, unapt to break;
These, interweaving close, they fasten well,
And, with Ox-hides, case smooth the natant Shell.
Press'd by the Rower's Weight, the dancing Boat
Does on the River's surging Surface flote:
So, the Venetian swims the laky Po:
So the bold Britons o'er vast Billows row.*

But I have been drawn, as it were, insensibly, to a Length of Digression. The Subject is important, and I cou'd with Pleasure, say so much more concerning it, that I break off with some Regret; lest the Reader shou'd think I detain him too long from the main Business before him. He will, however, distinguish the Difference between *Notes* and *Reflections*. The Latitude which I take in these excursive Dissertations will be justify'd by the *Title*, which for that very Reason I first chose to give them.

23. *Distinct, in two strong Powers, our Army led.*— Zebah, in his Sallies made before, has discover'd, in general, an unmeasurable Courage, urg'd forward by a boundless and inconsiderate Ambition. But here he admits the Reader to a closer Inspection of his Character, and demonstrates that he is *rash*, without a Mixture of *Judgment*. He reaches forward to his *End*, overlooking the *Means* as a Matter insignificant. He is for dividing an Army to encounter two Enemies, when the whole Strength together had been seven Years endeavouring in vain, entirely to subdue one of them.

24. *Skill'd in Discernment, let him still detect,
And point out Dangers fit for our Neglect.*— Zalmunna, in this Place, displays the first and most distinguishing Mark of his Disposition, which is a *Haughtiness* and Pride of Nature. He next discovers his *Subtlety*, in the Representation he makes from the Situation of *Israel*, that when *Phœnicia* shou'd be added to the *Midian* Dominions, the *Hebrews* becoming enclos'd on all Sides, must depend absolutely on their Pleasure: In such a Condition, says he,

25. *Clos'd in our Net, they must be subject still,
Or may, at ease, be taken in at Will.*— From which Consideration, and the present weak and contemptible Circumstances of the *Hebrews*, he infers the little Danger to be fear'd at their Hands; insinuating his Opinion, that the Conquest of *Phœnicia* was an infallible Way to reduce *Israel* in Consequence. But however, that he might leave no Matter behind him for Mischief to work upon, he superciliously vouchsafes a Permission to *Gideon*, that twelve Deputies, commission'd by the Tribes, might be sent after him to *Tyre*, who shou'd there be acquainted with his absolute Will and Pleasure, as to the Conditions on which
Peace

Peace might be allow'd them. Thus have all the five Kings their Inclinations plainly differing. In *Oreb* may be distinguish'd a generous open Nature; bold, fearless, unsuspecting, and eager for Glory. In *Zebah*, a violent undiscerning Precipitancy of Soul; inflam'd by a Courage which is incapable of Conduct and regardless of Consequences. In *Zeb*, an insatiate Thirst of War for the Encrease of his Treasure; with a Valour, rather govern'd by his Avarice, than influencing his Conduct. *Agag* is wise, jealous, wary, brave, and moderately aspiring. *Zalmunna*, proud, cruel, wily, valiant, over-bearing, and ambitious.

26. See with To-morrow's Dawn, that all our Host,

March hence, the shortest Way, to reach their Coast.— It had suited ill with *Zalmunna's* Character, either as a warlike Prince, or as a *Designing* one, to have represented him less expeditious in Execution of a Matter of such Consequence once resolv'd. There is nothing which contributes so much to the Success of War, as that horrible *Vigilance*, (as *Tully* calls it) which distinguish'd *Cæsar's* Conquests to such a Degree, that his *Actions*, says *Suetonius*, were frequently known to have prevented the Rumour of his *Dispositions*. In Cases of this Nature, the Suddenness of the Surprise astonishes the Intellects, and infinitely over-rates the Importance of the Danger. Attempts, when they are foreseen, may easily be prepar'd against; and where the Minds of Men have free Leisure to deliberate, they gain a gradual Confidence from mutual Encouragement, and come, at last, to consider their own Strength, in full Balance against the Enemy's. But where Invasion thus suddenly breaks in upon a Country, every Thing gives Way to the violent first Impulse; and Reason, wanting Time for Recollection of Advantages, is over-born and render'd useless; like a mathematical Engine, which, being fix'd on a steady Basis, lifts mighty Weights at Pleasure; but being toss'd upon the Sea, loses all its Force and Influence, for Want of Center and Stability.

In the Year 1705, the Earl of *Peterborow* being General of the *English* Forces in *Spain*, was admirably well vers'd in the Importance of this Reflection. After the Reduction of *Barcelona*, a Success, in itself, beyond the warmest Expectation, the Councils of War, as well *German* as *English*, were unanimously of Opinion, that no more should be attempted, the Winter being come on, and the Soldiers much fatigu'd, requiring Rest and Refreshment. The Earl, who was impatient to urge the Terror of the Enemy, as far as it would go, march'd, amazingly forward, with only twelve hundred Men, and those but ill provided. With this handful, well conducted, he advanc'd suddenly and unexpectedly, under Cover of fine Stratagems, and rais'd the Siege of *St. Matheo*, invested by seven thousand of the Enemy's regular Forces, under a well-experienc'd General. Nay, he pursued all their Body for many Days together, with about two hundred Horse, and giving them no Time to discern or examine into the Fallacy of those Rumours, which he artfully spread before him, he push'd them in Retreat, till he found himself stopp'd at a fortified Town, call'd *Nules*, which the Enemy marching out of, just before, had left garrison'd by a thousand Men. The Earl consider'd well the Importance of this Town, as a Place, where he afterwards found Horses enough to mount all the Infantry, which he had now left behind him; he knew, also, that he was neither able to take it, unless by Surprise, nor to make good his own Retreat, if he cou'd not become Master of it.

In this Condition, he makes Trial of that Influence which Terror and Amazement have a Power of producing in the Minds of Men, surrounded on a Sudden, by a Danger unexpected. He rides confidently up, at the Head of a few Dragoons, to the very Walls of the Town, under the Muskets of the Garrison, and requires them, with a high Voice and a peremptory Accent, to open their Gates within six Minutes, which if they did not comply with, before his main Body and Artillery came in Sight, he wou'd put Man, Woman, and Child, to the Sword, without Mercy or Distinction. The Townsmen, who remember'd that this was he who had taken *Barcelona*, and rais'd the Siege of *St. Matheo*, and who cou'd never believe nor imagine, that the main Body and Artillery which he talk'd of, were Terrors merely imaginary, became astonish'd and overwhelm'd by the Suddenness of their Danger, and throwing open their Gates in an Instant, surrender'd the Town to him; which good Fortune, as he improv'd it, was immediately attended by the Reduction of the whole Kingdom of *Valencia*.

It had been happy for this Nation, if the *Royal Martyr*, who, in the Year 1642, had form'd a Resolution like the Earl's, had *tenaciously*, like him too, resolv'd to maintain it. *Essex*, who was then General for the Rebels, had newly been beaten at *Edge-Hill*, and was march'd away to *London*, with Pretence to the Victory. The King, in the mean Time, advanc'd from *Oxford* on a sudden, whither the Enemy had suppos'd him retir'd for Refreshment, and came forward, unexpectedly, as far as *Brentford*, which he took by Assault, from a strong Body of the Rebels, who very obstinately defended it against the Royal Army. The City of *London*, astonish'd and confounded at so dangerous an Approach, pour'd out their train'd Bands; but these were not then considerable, as not having yet attain'd that fatal Experience, which the Continuance of the War supply'd them with. These, with *Essex's* shatter'd Regiments, drew up on *Turnham-Green*, and pretended to dispute His Majesty's further Passage: The King, with an admirable Courage and Discernment, propos'd (wou'd to God he had commanded!) to advance upon them, at once, and charge them in their Confusion; alledging the Probability there was, that Soldiers newly beaten, wou'd make but faint Resistance; that the train'd Bands were little better than a mere Show of War, and that both the one and the other were under Influence of a Surprise, from a March so unexpected; that they could not therefore, but be found in a Condition, ill able to support a smart and vigorous Charge; and that this Body being broken, the City itself, the very Fountain of the War, might be taken in as a Consequence; and the Rebels at *Westminster*, being driven disgracefully from that Nest, where all their Mischief had been brooded, wou'd find their Measures disappointed, and their Persons and Authority render'd contemptible on all Hands. That this was wisely advis'd, was very plainly demonstrated more than once, in the Course of that War, when *London*, defended by much greater Numbers, and those Numbers better disciplin'd, arm'd, and headed, was yet forcibly enter'd, possess'd, and insulted from Time to Time, without Danger or Opposition, by the Rebel's own Army, grown insolent by Prosperity. But the common Curse of Numbers, and Diversity of Opinions prevail'd against the King's; and that Army which might then have crush'd the Serpent in the Egg, march'd back without attempting it; and the *Londoners*, excited

ted by their Pulpit Insinuations, from that unfortunate Moment, became offensively and irreconcilably rebellious.

Zalmoxis, therefore, but maintains his proper Character, of a subtle designing Warrior, when, having determin'd to invade Tyre, he resolves on marching the next Morning, that so the Distance being short, he might appear before their Cities as soon as they cou'd well receive any clear or positive Intelligence of his advancing; and before they cou'd be reasonably suppos'd in Readiness to resist the Attempts of such a powerful Enemy.

27. *First, the loud Drums a solemn Warning beat.*— The Verses which follow this, describe something of the Manner of an eastern Army's decamping; which they always do with much Solemnity, Preparation, and Notice, by several known and distinct Sounds and Signals. In all which, the Romans either copied or equall'd them. Their Customs, in that Respect, having been very orderly and solemn, as appears in *Vegetius*, *Polybius*, and many other Authors.

28. *Next, loaded high, the buncy Camels go.*— The most general and useful Carriage over all the East, is upon Camels; the Strength of which very serviceable Beast enables him to bear vast Burthens, and the Breadth of his Feet, not easily sinking far into loose and dry Sand, makes them fitter than Horses, to travel over the wide and frequent Defarts in that Part of the World. They are very gentle and manageable; and patient, beyond Belief, of Hunger and Thirst: They will kneel at their Keeper's Order, to be the more easily loaded, and rise chearfully with their Burthens. It is common, and a very agreeable Prospect in those Countries, to discover at a Distance, on their fine and spacious Plains, long Rows or Strings, as they call them, of these Camels, ty'd together with Ropes, and following each other in File, high loaded with huge Packs, for a Mile or two in Length, with a very equal, grave, regular, and delightful Kind of Motion.

29. *And, as the Squadrons pass'd, with courteous Care*

Inform'd him whence they came, and who they were.— The Example of *Homer* has, I think, been too implicitly follow'd, by almost all the Poets, in long and tedious *Musters-Rolls* of the Armies they describe. The famous Catalogue of Ships, and their Commanders, in the Greek Poet, has, I know, its Admirers; and deserves Praise, I confess, in Respect to its Geographical Exactness. But 'tis none of a Poet's Business to teach the Knowledge of Places. Accounts of this Kind, 'tis true, are frequently necessary, and being artfully handled, might not only diversify a Poem, but also render it *delightful*, without which last Quality, the whole Labour is lost, and nothing certainly, can delight, that is tedious and heavy.

It will be needless to insert, as an Example, any Part of *Homer's* Catalogue, because that is generally known already. But the Reader may be better pleas'd with a modern Essay of the same Kind, which was writ in Imitation of it, and which *Ben Johnson* has not scrupled to prefer to it, in his commendatory Vision, printed before the old Edition of *Drayton's* *Battle of Agincourt*.

" There thou art *Homer*: Pray Thee use the Style

" Thou hast deserv'd; and let me read the While,

" Thy Catalogue of Ships exceeding His.

The Catalogue, here meant, is of those Ships which transported the *English* Forces, in our *Henry* the Fifth's first Attempt upon *France*: It may stand, as a Proof, what poor Products we are to expect, from a servile Imitation.

" But first, seven Ships from *Rochester* are sent,

" The *Bonadventure*, *George*, and the *Expence*,

" The *Henry Royal*, at her parting thence;

" Like the huge Bird, from *Gillingham* that flew,

" The *Antelope*, the *Elephant*, *Defence*,

" Bottoms, as good as ever spread a Clue;

" All having Charge, their Voyage having been,

" Before *Southampton* to take Soldiers in:

" Twelve Merchant Ships, of mighty Burthen all,

" New, off the Stocks, that had been rigg'd for *Stoad*,

" Riding in *Thames*, by *Lime-house*, and *Blackwall*,

" That ready were, their Merchandise to load.

" Eight goodly Ships from *Bristol* ready made,

" With *Spanish* Wine, which they for Ballast lade.

" And, as these eight the *Severn* Sea do stem,

" Five more, from *Padstow*, came along with them.

" From *Plimouth*, next, came in the blazing Star,

" And fiery *Dragon*, to take in their Fraught,

" With other four, especial Men of War,

" That in the Bay of *Portugal* had fought:

" The *Mare of Loo*, a right good Ship, well known,

" That twice, the Year before, the Streights had past;

" Two wealthy *Spanish* Merchants did her own,

" Who then but newly had repair'd her Wast:

" And from *Mount's Bay*, six more, that still in Sight,

" Waited with Her before the *Isle of Wight*.

" Nine

" Nine Ships for the Nobility, there went
 " Of able Men, the Enterprize to aid;
 " Northumberland, and Westmorland, in sent
 " Four score at Arms a-piece, and themselves laid
 " At six score Archers each, as Suffolk shows
 " Twenty tall Men at Arms, and forty Bows.
 " Darcy and Camois, zealous for the King,
 " Lovel, Fitzwater, Willoughby, and Ross,
 " Berkly, Powis, Burrel, fast together cling,
 " Seymour, and St. John, for the Business close,
 " Each twenty Horse, and forty Foot do bring,
 " More, to nine hundred, mounting in the Grofs,
 " In those nine Ships, and fifty them bestow'd,
 " With which the other fall into the Road.
 " From Holland, Zealand, and from Flanders, won
 " By weekly Pay, three score twelve Bottoms came,
 " From fifty upward, to five hundred Tun,
 " For every Use, a Mariner cou'd name:
 " Their glit'ring Flags, against the radiant Sun,
 " Show'd as if all the Sea had been on Flame,
 " Then Skiffs, Crays, Scallops, and the like, why these,
 " From every small Creek, cover'd all the Seas.

This is a very visible Imitation of *Homer*, though better, I think, than the Original, by so much as it is shorter; for no Man of Reason will be perswaded to believe, that in a Poem of this Kind, such a tedious and dry List of a Fleet, though it preserves a particular Piece of Antiquity (which is the Critic's weak Defence for *Homer*) can stand agreeably in the Place of Invention, Spirit, Fancy, and the Energy of Poetry.

Such a barren and distinct Enumeration gives a wearisome Satiety to the Mind, and drags too hard on the Attention. When I read, for so many Leaves together, not what Persons *do*, but who they *are*, and whence they *came*, without any of that enlivening Variety of Circumstance or Description, which shou'd relieve the Imagination: It puts me in Mind of our Ancestor's Epitaphs: Honest People, who thought it Merit enough to have liv'd, married, and got Children, without loading their Tombstones with the Weight of their *Actions*.

" Of William Wilson, Joan his Wife,
 " And Alice, their Daughter dear,
 " These Lines be left to give Report,
 " These three lie buried here.
 " And Alice was Henry Deacon's Wife,
 " Which Henry lives on Earth;
 " And is the Serjeant Plummer un-
 " to Queen Elizabeth.
 " With whom our Alice left Issue here,
 " Her virtuous Daughter Joan:
 " To be his Comfort every where,
 " Now joyful Alice is gone.
 " And here the Lady Margaret North
 " In Tomb, doth quiet lie;
 " Of Husbands four the able Spouse,
 " Whose Fame shall never die.
 " One Andrew Frances was the First;
 " The second Robert hight;
 " Surnamed Chertsey, Alderman;
 " Sir David Brook, a Knight.
 " But then comes He that passed all,
 " And was, in Number, fourth,
 " One, for his Virtue, made a Lord,
 " And call'd Sir Edward North.

Among these copious Particularities there is nothing that deserv'd the telling, if we except the great Rarity that comes in the Rear; a Man made a Lord for his *Virtue*! That indeed, must be own'd to have been a Wonder worth recording. It was consider'd too, it seems, as an Accident so unusual, that the good Man appears, by the last Verse, to have been asham'd of his Singularity, and rather chose to stick fast to his old knightly Title of *Sir Edward*, than be pointed at as he pass'd the Streets, for a Kind of a Miracle. But here follows something, which no Poet's List among them all can compare with, for *Exactness*.

" This Life hath on Earth no certain while,
 " Example by John, Mary, and Oliver Stile:
 " Who under this Stone, lieth buried in the Dust,
 " And putteth you in Memory, that all die must.

" John

" John Stile, born 1582, the 22d of May;
 " Died 1583, June the 25th Day.
 " The 5th of October, 1583, Mary Stile born was,
 " August the 5th, 1585, out of this Life she did pass.
 " Oliver Stile, the 25th of February, 1584, this mortal Life begun,
 " And ended the same, August the 9th, 1585, his Course being then run.

Bating, as is necessary, for the Difference between the Verses, a Man is apt to conclude, that a Poet too prolix in the Lists I have been speaking of, has as little to say for the Actions of the greatest Part of his Captains, as these very exact Epitaphs, for the *Oliver's*, *Alice's*, *Joan's*, and *Andrew's*, who occasion'd them.

But, since without some previous Description of the Leaders, and Numbers on both Sides, it is difficult to give the Reader that clearness of Idea which is necessary for his Comprehension of the Incidents; the great Care of a Poet in this Case, shou'd be to make his Narration *active*, that is, to find some probable Occasion of putting it into the Mouth of one of his chief Personages, or by some other artful Means, so to stir up the Attention, that the Reader may rather consider himself as a *Spectator*, and the Description, as a *Review* passing orderly before him. To this End, I have plac'd *Oreb* in his Chariot, informing *Gideon*, why sits by him, of the Number, Arms, Quality, Country, and Sovereign of each Party, as it passes, together with such Interposition of geographical, military, and historical Passages, as falling naturally into the Occasion, may also enliven and diversify the Subject. It was my Hope, so to order this Description, as that the Reader shou'd no more be tir'd in perusing it, than he wou'd be with *looking on*, while such an Army were in Reality passing by him; and if I have not mistaken the Success of my Endeavour, instead of the dry unpleasing Harshness, which is usual in these Cases, I have made *this* one of the most agreeable and lively Parts of the Poem.

30. *In five broad Lines our num'rous Army moves.*— The best military Reason for this Disposition in the March of the *Midian* Army, is that which *Oreb* gives for it in the four following Verses; but there is also a poetical Reason, which arises from the Opportunity which this Order affords, of describing every Leader, and his Division, under one general View, while they are represented thus collected, and yet led separate.

This extended Way of marching is almost every where practicable in the eastern Dominions, where neither plain Country nor Mountains are hedge'd, ditch'd, or divided, by any Manner of Enclosure; so that Armies, in those Parts, are very rarely reduc'd to the Necessity of marching in *Columns* or long Files, with few in Front, according to the Straitness of the Passages. But concerning the Safety and Danger of marching, and which Form may be judg'd strongest, most expeditious and best, I shall hereafter have Occasion to consider distinctly.

31. *Wide, 'twixt each, a Space we leave.*— Here again is a double Reason; a *Military*, which is describ'd in the Verses, and a *Poetical*, which is, that *Oreb* may have Time, betwixt the Marching by of one Body, and coming up of the next, to entertain his Companion with full Leisure and Distinction, and make Pauses, as it were, between the several Divisions; because the Apprehension might easily be confounded in a restless, undistinguish'd, and passant Succession of Rank after Rank, the whole Army together. By this Means, also, the little historical and geographical Particulars, which are sprinkled as Ornaments here and there in the Description, become natural and probable: For they are in a Manner made necessary to fill up the Entertainment of *Gideon*, in the Intervals, between the Bodies; whereas, had the Army march'd close and undivided, *Oreb* wou'd have found no Leisure to speak of any Thing, but the Numbers and Dependence of the Forces, as they pass'd promiscuously by him.

32. *At each big End of their strong Axel-Trees,
 Sharp-cutting Scythes are fix'd with edgy Slant.*— The Invention of these Chariots was owing to the Eastern People, and the Use of them, in a Manner universal over *Asia*, obtain'd not among the western Nations. This may possibly have proceeded from a remarkable Difference in the Earth's Superficies, which in *Asia*, is for the most Part stretch'd immensely into Plains and smooth Champian, more commodious for Wheel-Carriages, than the rocky Hill-Countries and narrow Vallies of *Europe*. Yet the *Britains*, when first invaded by *Cæsar*, are recorded to have fought in Chariots, which they manag'd on all Grounds with such admirable Dexterity, that they cou'd turn round, or stop short on the Declivity of very steep Hills; run backward and forward on the Beam or Pole, betwixt the Horses, and wind themselves at Pleasure, in and out, between Bodies of Horse or Foot, alighting from and recovering their Seats with an inconceivable Agility. These Chariots of the *Britons* were in all Points so agreeable to the Descriptions which *Homer* has given us of those in Use at the Siege of *Troy*, as well among the Besieg'd as the Besiegers, that a Man who were inclinable to enter the Lists in Defence of that old controverted Story of *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, might (from this Expertness of the ancient *Britons*, in a Method of Fighting, not taught them by their Neighbours) draw a plausible Argument, for that *Brutus* and his *Trojans*, whose Descendants the Writer above-mention'd wou'd have his Countrymen pass for.

But neither these ancient *British* Chariots, nor those describ'd by *Homer*, had Scythes to their Axel-trees; which *Xenophon* affirms to have been invented by *Cyrus*, who, says he, by that Addition, made them useful and terrible, for charging an Enemies strongest and best-compacted Bodies of Infantry; whereas, before, they were only of Service for light Skirmishing, and giving sudden and unexpected Alarms to the hostile Army. But this must have been a Mistake of *Xenophon's*; and *Cyrus* was rather the Restorer of an old Custom than the Inventor of a New, since we read of scyth-arm'd Chariots in the Expedition of *Semiramis* against the *Indians*. Among which last, they were either in Use before, or became common afterwards,

in Imitation of those they took from the Invaders; for so long after, as when *Tamurlane* made his Irruption into *China*, *Alhacent*, the Historian of his Life, and who was himself a great Captain under him, affirms the King of *China* to have been so surrounded in the Center of his Army by an almost impregnable Barricade of these Chariots, that to break in upon him prov'd an Enterprize more bloody, than the Overthrow of all those infinite Numbers which compos'd the Gros of his Army.

The Form of these Chariots was open, high, airy, and incredibly beautiful; Their Ornaments were sometimes beyond Description magnificent and wonderful; cover'd thick with Gold, Silver, and Variety of precious Stones, to such Degree, that they reflected so keen a Radiance from the Beams of the Sun glancing on them in their Motion, that it became almost impossible to look steadfastly toward them without remaining dazzled by their Lustre: But the more ordinary of them were only cover'd with Steel Plates; their Wheels were eight or nine Foot high; and by that Height they obtain'd two considerable Advantages; the Motion of the Chariot was less inconvenienc'd by rough Ground, Holes, Stones, or other casual Rubs in its Way, and bore the Riders so high above the Foot, that they were not easily reach'd by their Weapons, as they drove in and out between them. The Wheels themselves were of Wood, but rimm'd and sheath'd with Brass, to resist the many violent Strokes of Axes and Swords, which they were sure to meet with in their Passage; their Spokes were hung thick with loose and loud-jingling Plates of Brass, which in the Rapidity of their Motion form'd a stunning and confus'd kind of Roar, very terrible to an Enemy upon whom they were advancing; and it was almost impossible to inure Horses to stand a Charge of these Chariots, which came thundering, as it were, against them.

By Reason of the foremention'd Height of their Wheels the Axel-Trees rode four Foot, or more, above the Ground; and the Scythes, which ran out from their Ends, swept the Breast of an Enemy, but tho' these sharp-cutting Irons with which they were arm'd, have generally been call'd Scythes, they were not properly such: They were rather Scythes *revers'd*, their Backs bowing hollow, and their Circular Edge forming the *Outside* of the Bending. Had they been edg'd inward as Scythes are, they wou'd suddenly have clogg'd themselves, and retarded their own Motion; by the Weight not only of those Bodies which they wounded, but of those also, which, composing the hinder Ranks, they must either have stood still, or carried on before them; whereas the Edge on the contrary being outward, and the Form of the Iron slanting backward, and plac'd shelving from the Axel-Tree, they pass'd, as it were, *shaving* along, and drawing their Edges with a transient Sweep thro' the Bodies of the Enemy, dropp'd them off at their Points, and left them presently behind, without Impediment to their Progress.

To speak now concerning the Effects which these Chariots might be capable of producing, I am of Opinion, that there was none among the military Inventions of Antiquity, which deserv'd to be thought equal to this kind of Chariot. The Execution which is recorded to have been done by Elephants in antient Armies, was sometimes very terrible; but the Benefit, which arose from the irresistible Strength and Fierceness of those Beasts, was always dangerous and uncertain; since it may be observ'd in History, that they have frequently turn'd short upon their Masters, and trampled under Foot the Armies they belong'd to. The arm'd Chariots on the contrary, more bloody in their Effect, were nothing dangerous but to the Enemy. The Horses, which drew them, were train'd purposely to the Employment, and as manageable as those which were rode upon by the Cavalry. The most remarkable Inconveniences, which attended their Use, seem to me to have been these; Ditches, broken Ways, Banks, Palisades plac'd slantwise in the Ground; all these, to say nothing of Mountains, Woods, Hedges, and other *natural* Impediments, were capable of overturning them, or at least of putting a Stop to their Motion; and if the Drivers or any of the Horses were kill'd, they became presently useless. But against all, or most of these Disadvantages, easy Remedies might have been contriv'd in their Fabrick and Management, and Means being apply'd to secure the Horses against Wounds, there can be nothing conceiv'd which wou'd be more terrible, or which would so soon and so infallibly break into Disorder, and put to the Rout, the Battalions of an Enemy.

33. *Cross our Dominions ridgy Gilead runs*— This Kingdom of *Midian*, which *Oreb* reign'd over, was seated to the Eastward of the *Dead Sea*, or Lake of *Sodom*, betwixt the two Rivers of *Zared* and *Arnon*; both which disembody themselves into that Lake, after very different Courses; the first running South-West, and the second North-Westward. How far backward toward the East this Part of the *Midian* Dominions extended, cannot easily be distinguish'd; but certain it is, that it stretch'd itself considerably beyond that long Ridge of Mountains, which beginning in the North, very near to *Damascus*, runs Southward almost in a direct Line along that Part of *Palestine*, Eastward from *Jordan*, into stony *Arabia*, and the Desarts of *Moab*. These Mountains have been variously call'd by the Names of *Lebanon*, *Seir*, *Hermion*, *Hippus*, *Arnon* and *Gilead*.

This Kingdom of *Oreb*'s border'd close upon *Israel*; and tho' Descendants of the same Race with those other *Midianites* on the North Coast of the Red Sea, yet they appear to have been a Government entirely distinct from them. It was against these *Western Midianites* that *Moses* made War so successfully, when, under Conduct of *Phineas*, he sent out twelve thousand chosen Soldiers, and destroy'd five great Princes of their Nation, whose Names we are told in the Bible.

34. *These to the Right Confed'rate Moab sends*— The *Moabites* were seated so close upon this Tract of *Midian*, and for the most Part so strictly united with her People, that it is difficult to distinguish enough between the two Governments, which were sometimes included generally under one single Name, either of *Moab*, or *Midian*. The fine Plains of *Moab* however border'd close upon *Reuben*, betwixt the Mountains of *Arnon*, the River of that Name, and the East Shore of *Jordan*.

35. *Emims and Anakims, of hideous Fame*!— These were Men of huge Stature, and vast bodily Strength, and are therefore call'd *Giants* by *Moses*. The *Emims* were the aboriginal Inhabitants of *Moab*,

driven

driven thence by the Descendants of Lot: The *Anakims* in like sort were the old Natives of *Hebron*. These Men (says the Prophet *Buruch*) were the Giants so famous from the Beginning, that were of so great Stature, and so expert in War. They may be concluded to have been of most terrible Bulk, from the Report of the Spies of *Moses*, who, seeing some of these People, affirm'd, that themselves were in their Sight but as *Gashoppers*.

36. North-East from Moab bordering Ammon lies. — The *Ammonites* were close Neighbours to *Gad*, and possess'd a very rich and considerable Part of the stony *Arabia*, on both Sides of the before-mention'd Mountains of *Arnon*. They were frequently subject to *Moab* and *Midian*, and assisted them on all Occasions against *Israel*. Their Capital was *Rabba*, now call'd *Philadelphia*, the City which *Joa* besieged, when by Order of *David*, *Uriah* was plac'd, on purpose to be kill'd, in the Front of the Assaulters. These *Ammonites* were made Tributary to *Israel* in the Reign of *Jotham*; the Countries then possess'd by the People of *Ammon*, *Moab*, *Midian*, and all the neighbouring Principalities, particulariz'd in Scripture, are now generally inhabited by the *Arabs*, dependent on the *Turkish Empire*.

37. And by the Hand of your Great Chief he dy'd. — This *Og*, of whom *Oreb* now speaks, was that King of *Basan*, overthrown and kill'd by *Moses*, against whom he march'd hastily to prevent his Advance farther Westward; his Country was a famous Woody Tract, which made Part of that first Division of Lands, East of *Jordan*, to the two Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad*, and the Half-Tribe of *Manassah*.

38. Their luckless Balac stood to curse your Race. — This *Balac*, the Son of *Zippor*, was a King of the *Amorites*, or of *Moab*, or *Midian*, or *All*. His Story, to which *Oreb* refers in the Poem, is told at large in the Book of *Numbers*. *Balaam*, tho' unable (from the over-pow'ring Influence of a diviner Spirit than his own) to curse the *Hebrews*, as was desir'd from him, found out a Way of hurting them, which was much more effectual than his Curses cou'd have been, had he found Power to pronounce them; for he was Author of that Advice to draw *Israel* to Idolatry and the Customs of the *Midianites*, by the Temptations of their finest Women, whom for that Purpose they instructed, and permitted to converse frankly among the *Hebrews*; the Consequences of this Artifice brought on the before-mention'd War between *Moses* and *Midian*, and it was therefore an Incident very likely to dwell strong in the Memory of *Oreb*.

39. These too from Midian, mighty Founder! spring. — *Zeb's* Kingdom consisted of another Nation of *Midians* in the stony *Arabia*; its Capital, call'd *Selah* in the Poem, is better known by its other Name of *Petra*. The Situation of this Kingdom, and general Qualities of its Soil, are so fully describ'd in the Verses, that it were needless to say more of it in this Place.

40. Three thousand Slingers upon Camels ride. — Notwithstanding what has been so generally affirm'd by the Historians of *Italy* and *Greece*, that the Inhabitants of *Majorca* and *Minorca* in the *Mediterranean* Sea were Inventors of the Sling, and that they took their Names of *Baleares* from their Skillfulness in the military Uses of that Weapon, yet it is demonstrable from the Old Testament, that the *Hebrews* were most expert in its Practice, before the two Islands above-mention'd were inhabited, or perhaps so much as known; for (not to insist on the remarkable Dexterity of *David* in his Combat with *Goliath*) we read, that in One of the Twelve Tribes only, which was that of *Benjamin*, there were seven hundred among their Slingers, who could hit within a Hair's Breadth of any Mark which they threw at. The *Israelites* no doubt were taught this Art, as well as the rest of their military Exercises, while they continued in *Egypt*, and serv'd; as *Josephus* informs us, among the Troops of the *Pharaohs* in their Wars with *Aethiopia*. The Sling therefore, being a Weapon of unquestionable Use among the Nations of the East, I had sufficient Authority for arming in this Manner a considerable Body of *Midian* Soldiers.

The Slingers of *Majorca* were indeed of no small Service among the Consular Armies of the *Romans*, where together with Auxiliary Archers they compos'd the light-arm'd *Velites*, whose Business it was to pass swiftly and suddenly thro' the Openings or large Intervals of the Legionary Cohorts, and endeavour in distant Skirmish to disorder an Enemy by the violent Discharge of their Volles of missile Weapons, before the regular Bodies of the heavy-arm'd Foot cou'd come close enough to shock together.

The Effect of these Slings must certainly have been considerable; for they threw Stones or Leaden Bullets of a Pound Weight so forcibly, that *Vegetius* affirms, they wou'd break thro' a Corslet, or Head-piece, and bruise the Wearer mortally at the distance of six hundred Foot; which is more than a *Musket* can do easily, unless 'tis a very extraordinary one: But we must interpret rather in a Poetical Sense, than a literal, this Account in *Lucretius*.

“ Rolling in rapid Course thro' Lengths of Sky,
“ The Sling-cast Bullets, scatt'ring Drops from high,
“ Melt down in Leaden Cataracts, as they fly.”

And the same Thought has been borrow'd from *Lucretius* by *Virgil* and *Ovid*, and almost all the *Latin* Poets.

41. Experienc'd Archers these! Their Left-Hands bear
Tough and Springy Bows of Steel: — Our Nation has formerly been so famous for excellent Archers, and so indebted to the Skill of their Bowmen for some of the most glorious of their Victories, that in Reason and Gratitude we shou'd hear and examine whatever can be urg'd in Behalf of a Weapon we have so often been oblig'd to; Mr. *Edmunds*, in his Observations on *Cesar's Commentaries*, has impartially consider'd the Nature and Use of the Bow; and I will set down his Thoughts in his own Words.

The Effects, says he, which the Bowmen work are two; first, the *Galling* of the Enemy; and secondly, the *Disordering* them: As to the first, there cannot be a better Description than is given us by *Plutarch* in the Overthrow of the *Romans* by the *Parthian* Arrows: "Their Hands, says he, were nail'd to their Targets, and their Feet to the Ground; they were wounded in their Bodies, and died of a cruel and lingering Death, roaring out in Extremity of Anguish, and turning and tormenting themselves on the Earth, so that they broke the Arrows sticking in them; and striving by Force to pluck out the barb'd Heads, that had pierc'd deep into their Bodies thro' Sinews and Veins, they open'd their Wounds wider, and destroy'd themselves by their Impatience."

As to the *Disorder* or *Routing* of an Enemy by Bowmen it is caus'd by the terrible Spectacle of a whole Drift of Arrows; such a Shower well deliver'd, and well seconded, for a while, is so fearful to the Eye, and so dreadful in the Success, that it is almost impossible to keep the Enemy from *Routing*.

The two great Victories at *Cressie* and *Agincourt*, next to the Valour of the *English*, are attributed to our Bowmen; and the Effect of Archery in those Days was first *Disorder*, and consequently *Slaughter*. In the Battle of *Cressie* the King of *Bohemia*, fighting for the *French*, commanded his Horsemen to tie their Bridles together, but the Drift of Arrows fell so terribly upon them, that the Horses ran one among another in Heaps, and occasion'd such Confusion, as made their particular Destinies most miserable: At *Agincourt*, where the Disorder of the *French* was so great, that many of our Men had ten Prisoners apiece, that Disorder was owing to our Archery; and doubtless, if ever we should war against an Enemy abounding in Horse, as the *French* do, there could no better Remedy be found than our Bowmen. I know 'tis pretended that the Times are now alter'd, and the Musket and other Fire-Arms so universally receiv'd, and of such deserv'd Reputation, that, in Comparison with them, the Bow is not worth naming. I will therefore deliver my Opinion concerning the different Effects of these Weapons, and leave it to the further Consideration of wise and discreet Commanders.

And first, as to Shot. A Wing of Musketeers is only available in such Bullets as hit; for such as do not hit pass insensibly away, and the Crack is as harmless as the *Loss* of the Bow; of such Bullets as do hit, the greatest Part do not kill, but are oftentimes carried till the Skirmish is over, before the Party so much as feels himself hurt; so that an Enemy receives no other Damage from Fire-Arms, than in the Men who are either grievously or mortally wounded, or else kill'd outright.

But a Body of Archers is available against an Enemy, as well by the Arrows which miss, as by those which may hit: For the Cloud of Arrows comes subject to our Sight, and every Arrow is both suspected and able to bring Death along with it; and an Enemy is as much troubled at such Arrows as come fair upon him, as at those which actually hit him; no Man being willing to expose his Flesh to open and imminent Danger, when it lies in his Power to avoid it; and hence it is, that while every Man seeks by a different Motion to avoid the same Danger, they fall suddenly into such Confusion, as produces disorderly Routings and Overthrows; and the Heads of the Arrows being barb'd, tho' the Wound they may make be never so flight, yet they are not without much Difficulty to be drawn out; and the Soldier who has one of them hanging in his Flesh, will be careless of what happens to the rest, and not mind the Fight in the least till he get himself freed of the Arrow, which otherwise continues to prick and torment him afresh upon every Motion; and it is worse still where they stick in the Bodies of Horses, for it makes them to chafe, fret, and fling with such irregular Violence, that they throw off their Riders, break all the Ranks, and becoming unmanageable, disorder a whole Squadron; and so far Mr. *Edmunds*.

I shall add from *Bishop Wilkins's* Comparison betwixt ancient Engines, and those us'd since Gunpowder, an Instance or two, which may serve to prove, that if Bows were well made and to be drawn by an expert Arm, their Force would rather exceed, than fall short of, that of Fuses, or Muskets.

"Tis related of the *Turkish* Bow, that it can strike an Arrow thro' a Piece of Steel or Brass two Inches thick; and being headed only with Wood it pierces Timber of eight Inches Thickness. And this Observation he draws, if I mistake not, from the learned Lord *Bacon's* Natural History.

"*Barclay* in his *Icon animorum*, a Man of sufficient Credit, affirms, that he was an Eye-Witness how one of these Bows, with a little Arrow, did pierce thro' a Piece of Steel three Fingers thick; and yet the Bow was bent only by a Man's immediate Strength, without the Help of any Bender, or Rack, which are us'd to others.

"Some *Turkish* Bows, says Mr. *Greaves* in his Discourse of the Pyramids, I speak what I have seen, are of that Strength as to pierce a Plank of Six Inches in Thickness.

Ringrose, in his History of the Buccaneers of *America*, has given us a remarkable Instance, as well of the Effect of an Arrow, as of that untameable Feirceness of Nature, which is commonly call'd Courage in the Common People of *England*, and for which they are distinguishable above all Nations of *Europe*; Sir *Harry Morgan*, the famous Pirate, who was afterwards made Governour of *Jamaica*, attack'd the City of *Panama*, and took it from the *Spaniards*, having first beaten a Body much superior to his own; before he began his March to this City, he found it necessary to get Possession of a Castle called *Chagre*, strongly seated, well fortified, and defended by a considerable Garrison. His Free-Booters, after their desperate Fashion, neither having Artillery of their own, nor regarding that of their Enemies, thought of nothing but the positive Resolution they had form'd to become Masters of the Castle; they ran furiously up against the full Fire of the Canon, and leap'd down from the cover'd Way to the Bottom of the Ditch, with Intention to carry the Place by Scalado: The Garrison much surpriz'd and confounded by the Rashness of so unexpected an Action, made however a terrible Fire from all Quarters, and were answer'd in like

like Manner from a Reserve of Free-Booters who took Post on the cover'd Way : In the Heat of this Assault an *English* Common-Soldier, perceiving himself shot thro' the Back with an Arrow from a Bastion, the Head of which he discern'd sticking out at his Breast, he took hold of the Arrow, and drew it out through his Body. Then wrapping a Piece of Cotton about it, ram'd it into his Musket in a Rage, and shot it back at the Enemy; it happen'd that this Arrow with its Cotton in a Flame by the Flash of the Powder, descended, and stuck fast upon the Thatch of a long Row of Barracks in the Center of the Castle; and the Thatch taking Fire blaz'd on all Sides at once, so that the whole Row of Huts were seen burning from the Ramparts : The Amusement and Confusion, which this Accident occasion'd, gave Encouragement to the *Buccaneers* to enforce their Assault; so that entering the Castle on all Sides, they first help'd the *Spaniards* to put out the Fire, and then took Possession, and imprison'd the Garrison.

42. *Midian's utmost Southern Bound.* — This Kingdom of *Zalmunna's*, which extended itself on the Arabian Side along the Coasts of the Red Sea, was the Country of *Jethro*, call'd *Midian* in the Books of *Exodus* and *Numbers*, and appears to have been the largest, most populous, and richest Tract of Land which was possess'd by the *Midjanites*; I have therefore made his Power and his Numbers much superior to the others.

43. *Where your Great Moses Jethro's Daughters found.* — It is reasonable to suppose that a Prince, so near a Neighbour to *Israel* as was *Oreb*, must have been perfectly acquainted with the History of the *Hebrews*; and that he so often starts aside into little digressive Observations, by way of Reference, to some Action, Place, or Accident, which might at once do Honour to the Countrymen of *Gideon*, and discover to him how skilful his Companion was in the Particulars of their Story, is the natural Effect of that Complacency and Humanity, which I design'd shou'd be conspicuous in the Character of *Oreb*.

44. *This Prince is Lord of Amalek's wide State.* — The Princes of *Amalek* were possess'd of almost the whole Extent of *Arabia* the stony, from *Idumaea* on the West and South-West to *Arabia Felix* and the Desert on the East and North-Eastward : The Name of *Agag* was a general Title, by which all their Kings were distinguish'd, as the *Pharaohs* in *Egypt* and the *Cæsars* among the *Romans* : How powerful these Kings were, may be gather'd from their coming out against *Israel*, in her March from the Red Sea, with no fewer than six hundred thousand fighting Men, who were routed by a select Body of *Hebrews*, the most skilful in Arms who cou'd be found among their Tribes, under Conduct of *Joshua*; and this was not only the first Victory he obtain'd, but the first military Action which the *Israelites* were engag'd in after their Departure from *Egypt*.

It is necessary that an *Epic* Poet shou'd, in all that he writes, be as natural as possible in the whole Course of his Imitation; he is to feign and invent, but he is to do it with Reason. Though he is not strictly ty'd down to describe Things as they were, he must describe them as they might have been, or as it is most probable to suppose they would be in a Case of like Nature; it was from this Consideration that I have suited the military Furniture of these Princes to the different Conditions and Situation of their Countries; *Zeb* therefore and this *Agag* have no Chariots in their Armies, because rocky and mountainous Territories must have render'd them useless.

45. *Call'd Hagareens from Hagar, Abraham's Maid.* — The Story of *Hagar*, *Sarah's* Handmaid, is well known and told at large in the Bible; she was Mother of *Ishmael*, from whom descended originally all the present Possessors of *Arabia*, and great Part of *Persia*, *Aethiopia*, *Egypt*, and *Africa*.

46. *On which, in shifting Cities oft they dwell.* — Many Nations among the *Arabs*, as also the *Tartars*, live wholly in Tents, and remove from Place to Place, as Change of Humour or of Season inclines them; they carry their Wives and Children along with them in huge high-wheel'd cover'd Carts, and their Goods upon Camels: When they come to a pleasant Situation, where there is Plenty of Grass, and some fine limpid Rivulet, there they pitch their Tents regularly like the Streets of a City, the Form of which is known, and the same in all their Stations. The Conditions of the wealthy are distinguish'd among them by the Height, Extent, and Richness of their Tents, as among the *Europeans* by the Largeness and usual Ornaments of their Buildings.

47. — *Happy Arabia's aromattick Plains.* — It is not known whether the *Midjanites*, strictly speaking, were possess'd of *Arabia Felix*; but the Descendants of *Midian* and *Ishmael*, either jointly or separately, were Inhabitants of that Region; and it is of no considerable Consequence to distinguish nicely between them, since they are often included (in the Writings of *Moses*) under one general Name of the Children of the East: they are also call'd promiscuously by that Name in the History of this very Story of *Gideon*, by the Author of the Book of *Judges*.



GIDEON;

